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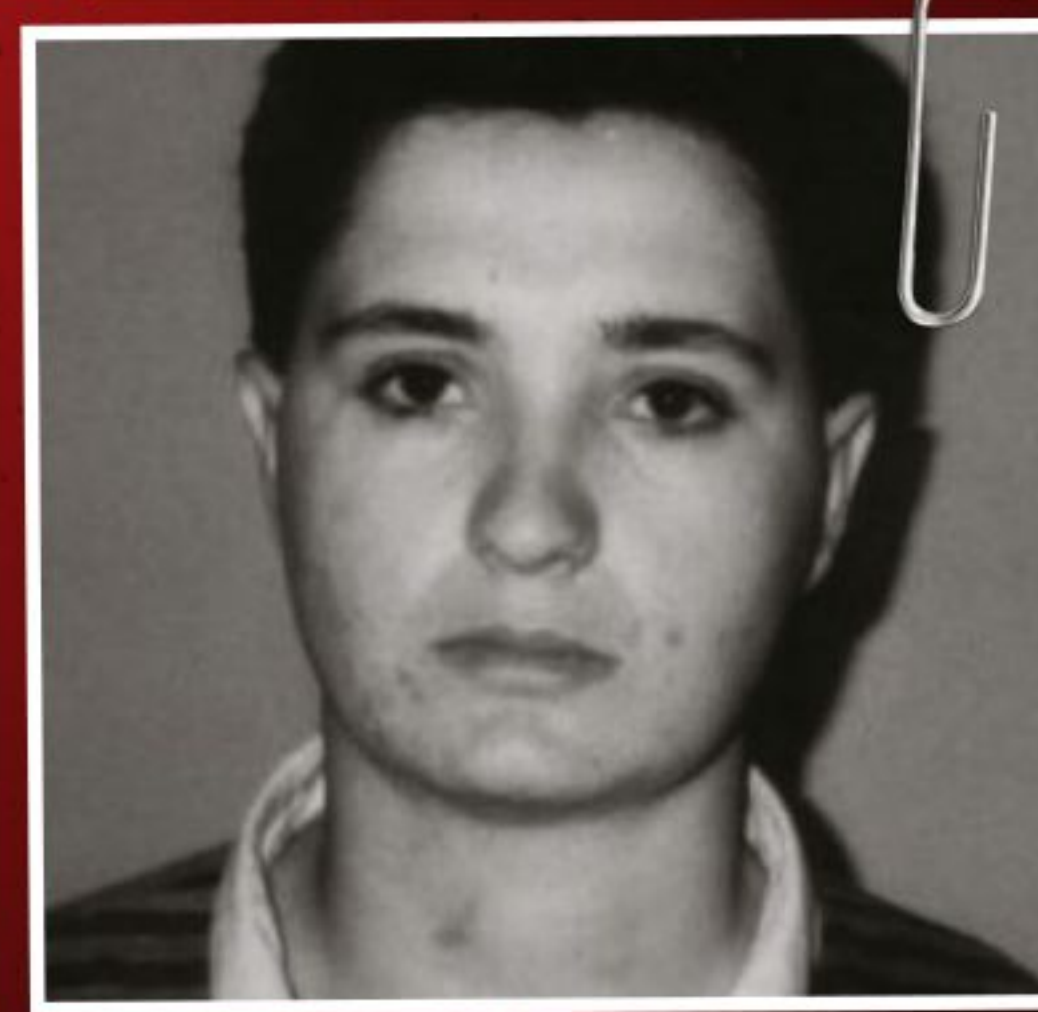
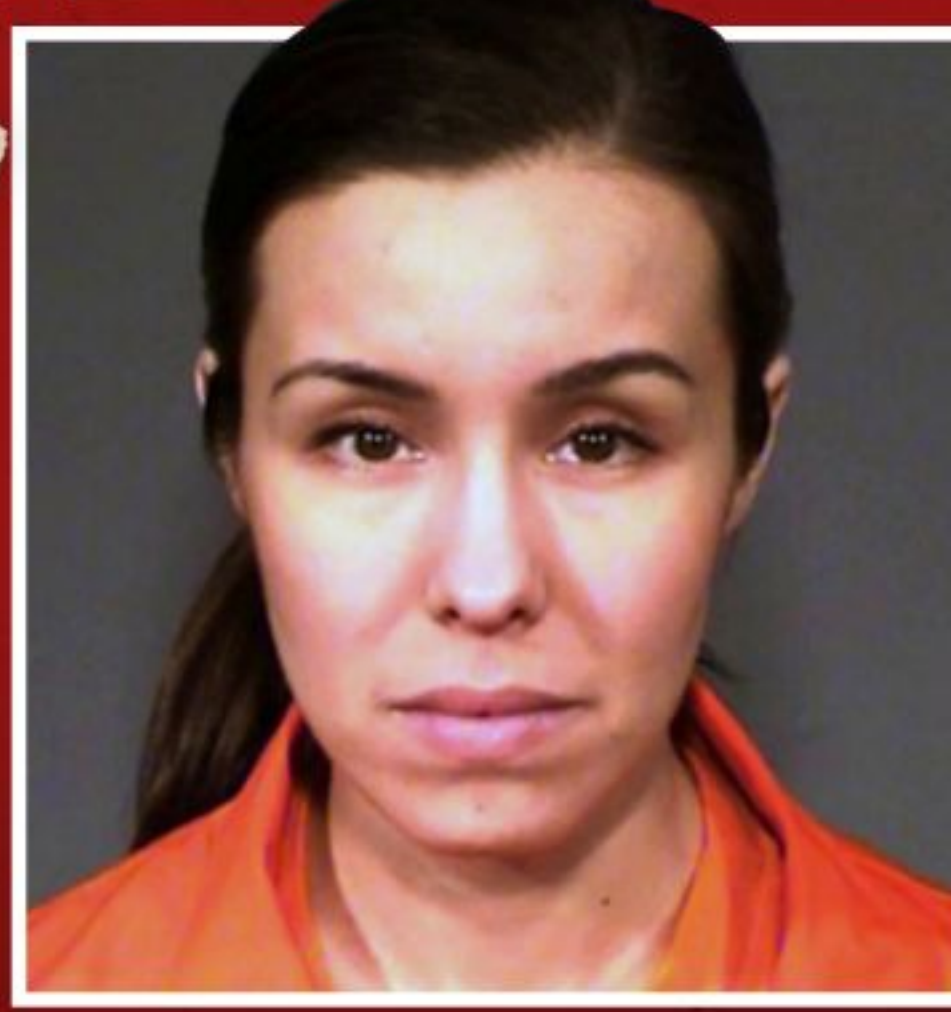
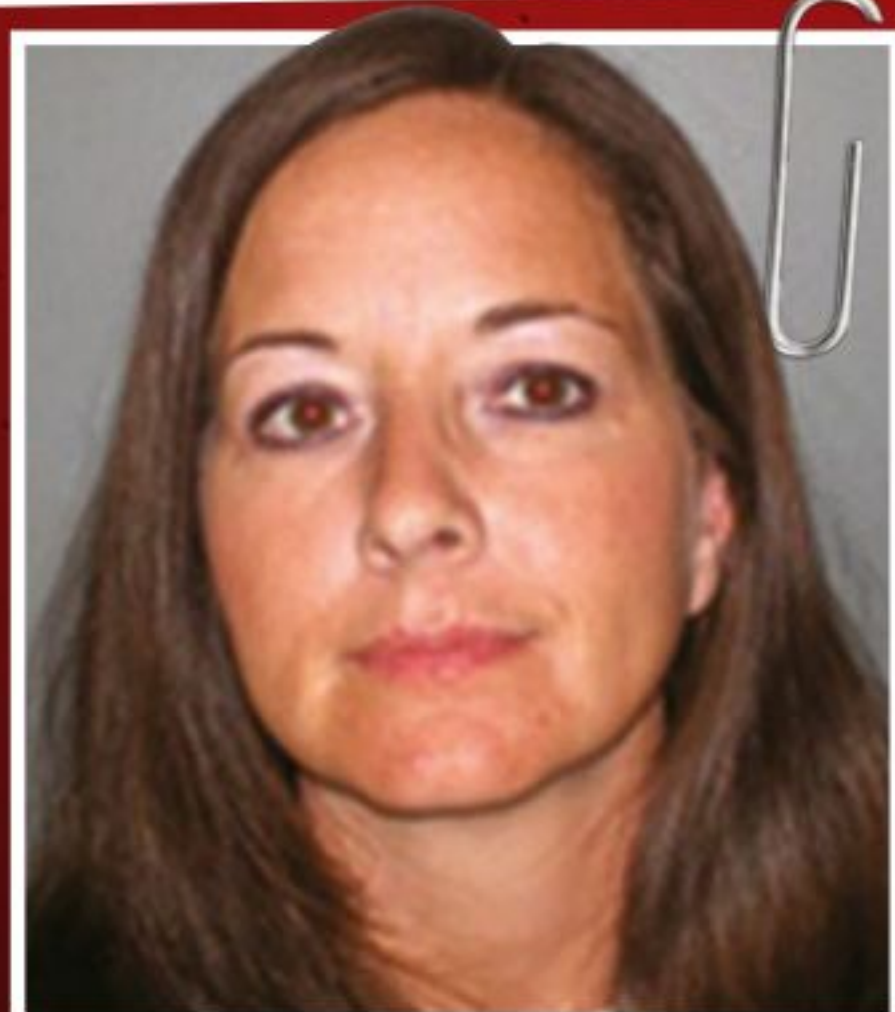
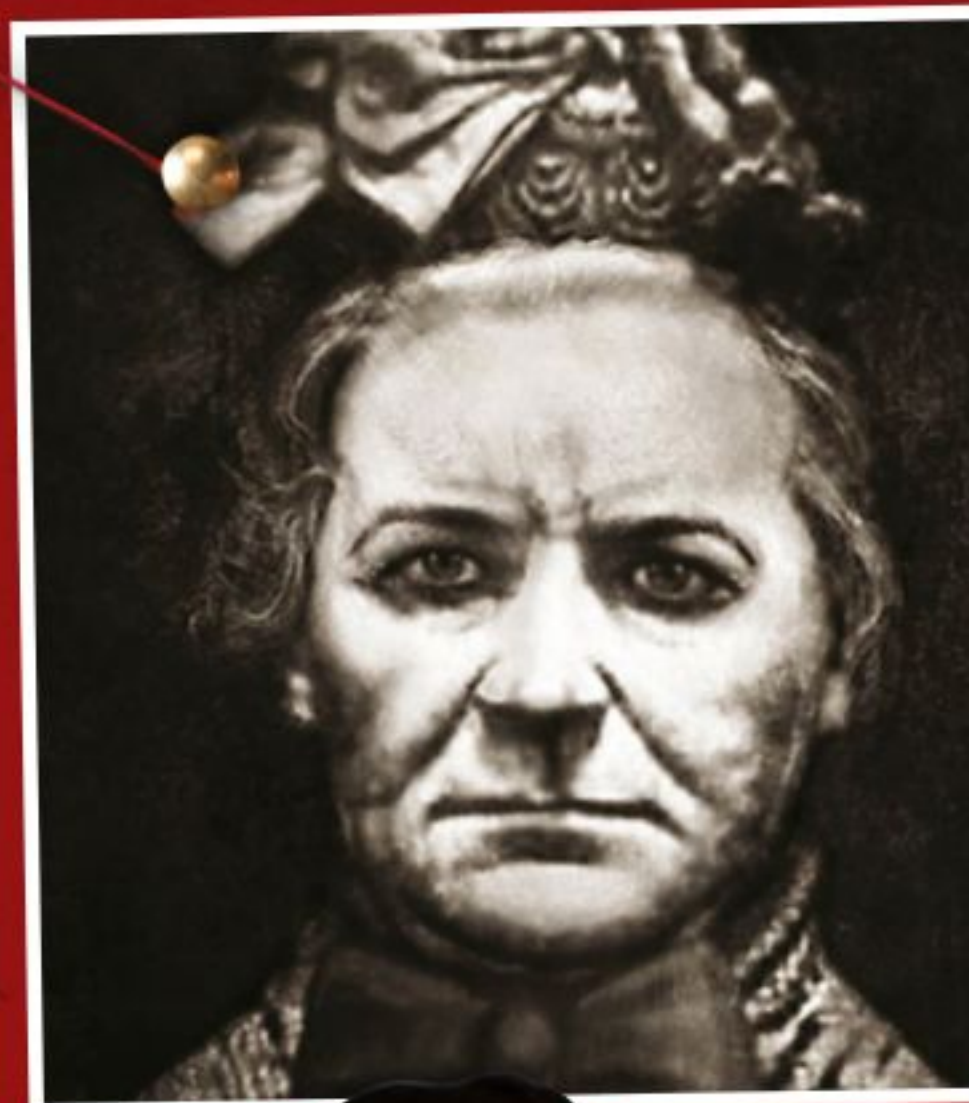
REAL
CRIME

WOMEN WHO KILL

INSIDE THE MINDS OF HISTORY'S DEADLIEST
AND MOST DEPRAVED WOMEN



OVER
20
DEADLY
MURDERERS
INSIDE



Digital
Edition

FUTURE

SECOND
EDITION

CASE FILES • CRIME SCENE PHOTOS • KEY EVIDENCE



WELCOME TO

WOMEN WHO KILL

Women are often seen only as mothers, sisters, daughters, all born with the natural desire to nurture and create life – certainly not take it. The Real Crime book of Women Who Kill seeks to unveil the controversial stories that led certain women to commit the ultimate crime. From jealous lovers, such as Sarah Williams and Els Clottemans who savagely removed their love rivals from the picture, to Beverley Allitt and Susan Smith who targeted innocent children, we'll look at the women who found themselves playing out the most horrible atrocities. Packed with crime scene photos, maps of killers' hunting grounds and the insight of top criminal psychologists, the world's most notorious female killers are featured within these pages. So if you're ready, let's take a look inside the investigations that led to the capture and arrest of these depraved women...

┌ FUTURE ┐
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WOMEN WHO KILL

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Women Who Kill Second Edition

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CRIME**

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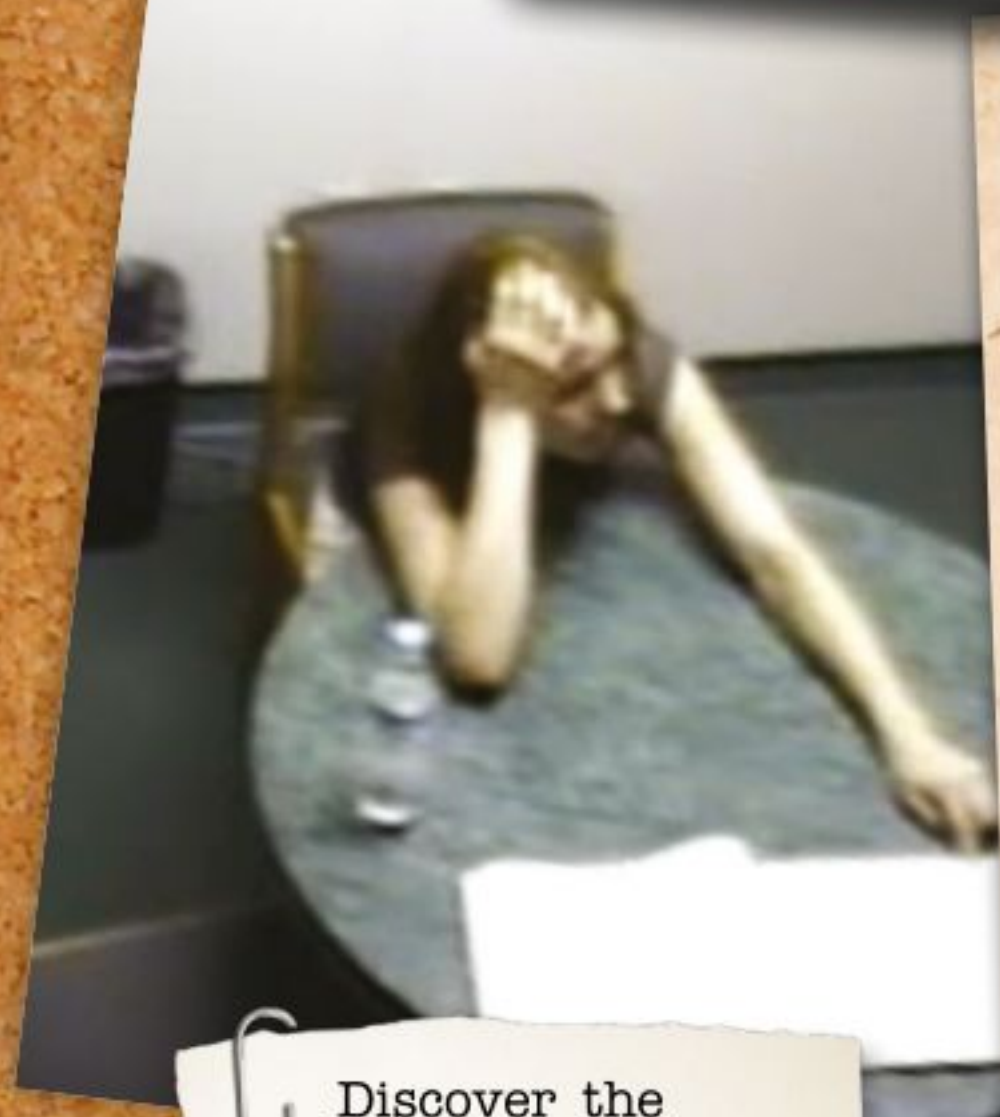
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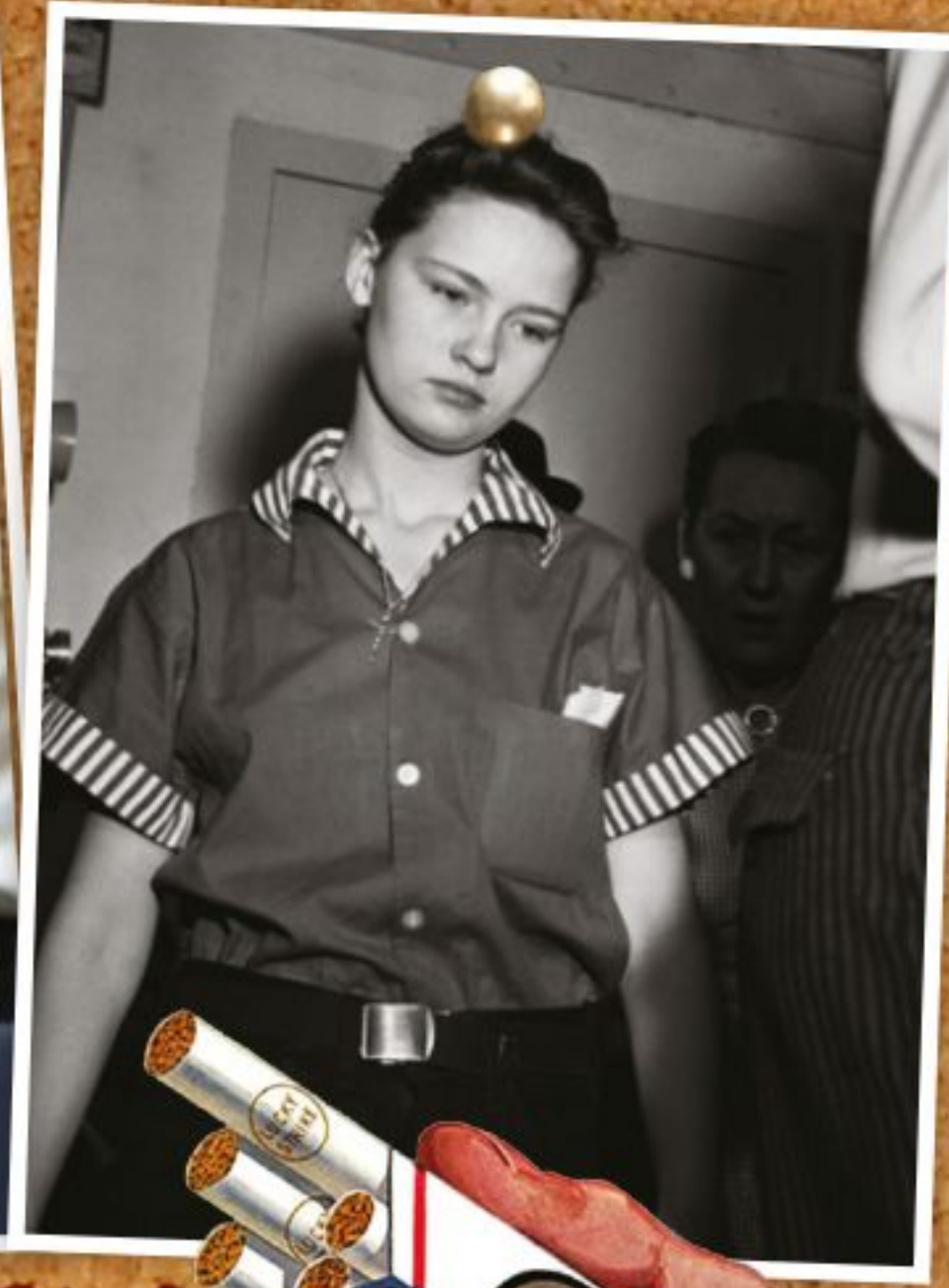


OVER
20
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MURDERERS





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LAST RESORT
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NEW SMYRNA
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MAN HUNTER

THE RIGHTEOUS RAGE OF AILEEN WUORNOS

AFTER SIX CONVICTIONS OF KILLING INNOCENT MEN IN COLD BLOOD, DID THE USA'S MOST INFAMOUS FEMALE SERIAL KILLER REALLY DESERVE TO DIE?

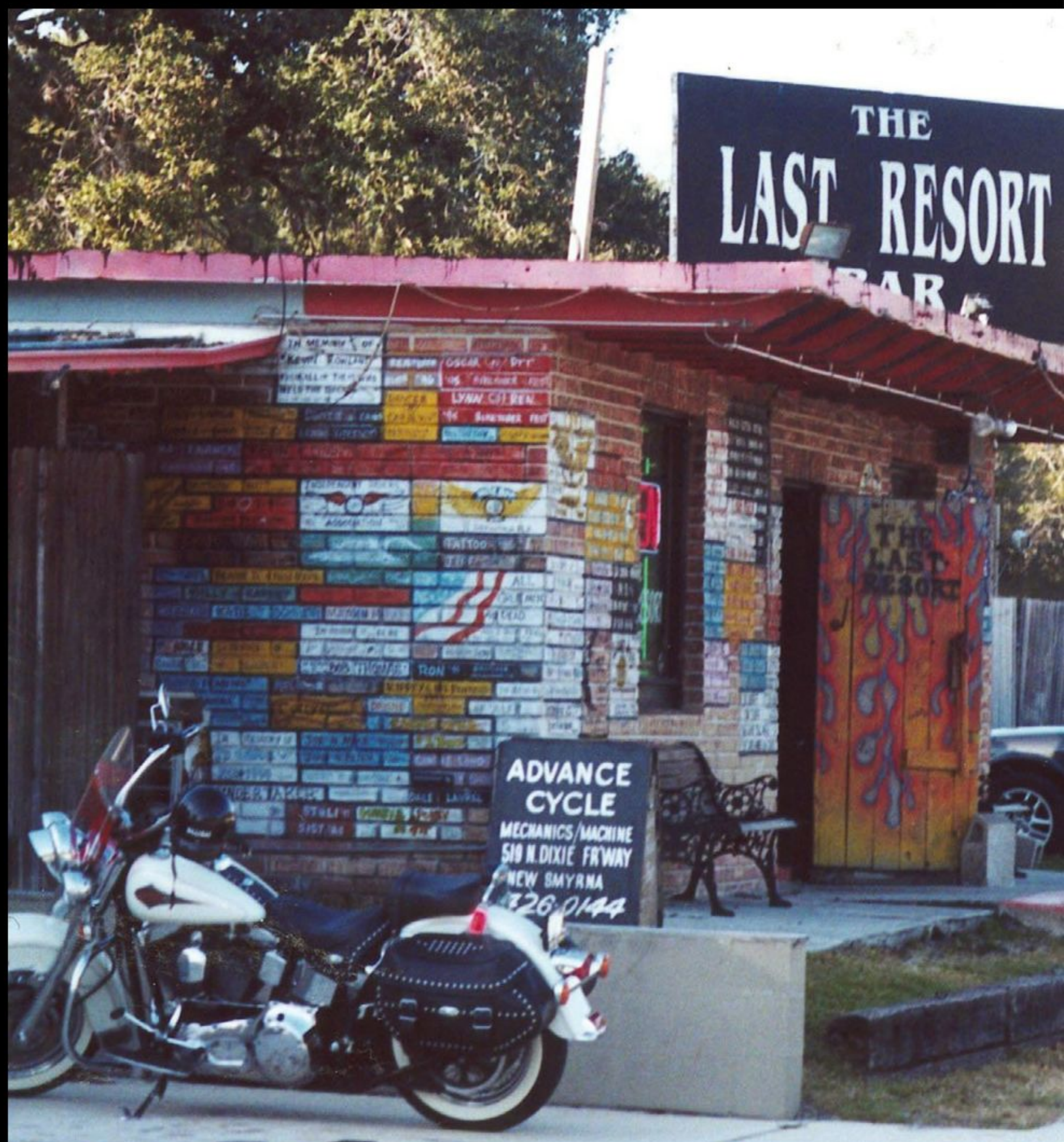
WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON



ABOVE Wuornos was defiant from the moment she was captured to the day she was executed

CENTRE The Last Resort Bar, now a shrine for ghoulish pilgrims promising "ice cold beer and killer women," was where Wuornos enjoyed her final drink

RIGHT Wuornos's emotions varied greatly, but she is often shown haggard and raving



How can a dreamer be dead at 14? You could ask Aileen Wuornos, although she actually died many years later. Aileen's life was effectively over when she was a smiling slip of a kid sucking on men's private parts for cigarettes in the woods near her home. The real question is what actually went on inside her head and why it led to her being sentenced to death for killing seven men that she picked up while working as a hooker.

Aileen dreamed a dream in which she saw her life through the movies, put up a front and played the roles she thought were expected of her. The roles her life cast her in were, sadly, extraordinary. The narratives included other characters too, such as one of her victim's widows, Shirley Humphreys, who said in a televised interview that she couldn't wait to see the bubbly blonde meet Old Sparky, as the electric chair was then known.

Aileen was born in 1956 in Michigan to Diane, a mother who dumped her six months after birthing her, and her father Leo was jailed for paedophilia. Aileen, her sister Laurie and her brother Keith were sent to live with her grandparents. Not that this initially bothered the bright little girl with the slightly wonky grin, though she was rumoured to actually be the biological daughter of her grandfather, who was rumoured to abuse both her and her mother. In *Aileen Wuornos: Life And Death Of A Serial Killer*, life-long friend Dawn Botkins also said that she had seen Aileen beaten badly by her guardian in full knowledge that the assault was being watched. By the age of 14, still really a baby herself, Aileen had given birth to a baby that had been taken from her

for adoption, and soon she was living in the woods having been kicked out of home. In subsequent interviews, Aileen's breezy tone belies the bitter winters she spent sleeping in a car in the snow while still a child. Her mother later claimed to documentary filmmaker Nick Broomfield that she had no knowledge of her daughter's plight, arguably showing the level to which she appears to have cared.

Her daughter became a pint-sized prostitute aged nine for what seems to have been for little more than a bit of company. The local kids thought she had no shame, and she suffered for it at the boys' braying mouths, with one Jerry Moss commenting at a trial that he would take her "gifts" while calling her a "bitch" and throwing rocks at her to make sure no one associated them together. Torn between the two personalities of an innocent dreamer and a derelict, Aileen was *Les Misérables*: a little girl lost. The ailing Aileen was turning blue, both through lack of love and barely any body heat owing to living outside at such a tender age. Realising she would have to save herself, she reached for the sunny smile of Florida.

COME ON, AILEEN

The good-time party girl followed that dream and rocked up on Daytona Beach in search of clear blue skies. First she married yacht club president Lewis Gratz Fell (getting divorced shortly after). Then she got on down to the local biker bar, The Last Resort, like there was no tomorrow. She became great mates with The Human Cannon Ball (though



“ QUIETER MOMENTS SUGGEST SHE HAD THE CAPACITY TO BE A RELATIVELY ‘NORMAL’ INDIVIDUAL WHO HAD SUFFERED THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY AND TERRIBLE OF CIRCUMSTANCES ”

none of the lads would touch a lesbian or ‘flap cracker’, as she was known). Eventually, she formed a relationship with Tyria Moore, a woman she met in a gay bar in the area. She professed love for this lady, despite Tyria’s alleged demands for more robberies for more money to fund their pleasure-seeking lifestyle. Aileen was creating the illusion that her life was full of love, fun and friends. All the while she was still turning tricks, but as any decent magician knows, the greatest effects work by correctly assessing the risks. Aileen’s prop was a pistol, carried for ‘protection’, but this didn’t just pop a little flag out when she pulled the trigger, and she couldn’t reset the scene afterwards.

But those are just the facts. Or at least, they’re the recollections that people have of her. They jar and jive with the images we have of the woman from the medium that made her famous – the movies she knew even then that the police working on her case were selling their stories to make. We know Aileen through films: Nick Broomfield’s two documentaries (*Aileen Wuornos: The Selling Of A Serial Killer* and *Aileen: The Life And Death Of A Serial Killer*) and as played by an ‘uglified’ Charlize Theron in the film *Monster*. This is in addition to lesser-known features such as *Overkill*, *The Aileen Wuornos Story* and others. Wuornos

was portrayed either as a drama queen with puppy-dog enthusiasm who was betrayed, or an abused pitbull that would snap if petted by the slightest unwanted hand.

That unwanted hand came courtesy of Richard Mallory, a typical pickup on the highway. Like any sex worker who wants to stay safe and make money, Aileen had to be a people pleaser on the job and spoke in *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling Of A Serial Killer* about how she would converse on politics and religion with her clients. While this is probably an exaggeration of the thematic depth of her actual conversations, the style normally worked. With Mallory, however, it fell on deaf ears and he began to verbally and sexually abuse Aileen, calling her a slut and anally raping her, aided and abetted by rubbing alcohol. Relating her thought process during the attack in court, rather than simply recalling an instantaneous reaction to the situation, there is the suggestion that she realised she had to kill or potentially be killed. It is as though she projected the attack on to someone else, and Aileen cried while giving her evidence. Dragging on every ounce of her reserve, she spat in his face to buy time, grabbed her bag and shot him. It was a scene of pure survival, and like Jennifer from *I Spit On Your Grave*, she sought to make herself safe.

Aileen is born. Her mother divorces her father two years later. **1956**

Diane, Aileen’s mother, abandons her children to their grandparents. **1960**

Just 11 years old, Wuornos begins exchanging sexual favours for cigarettes. **1967**

Wuornos is raped by her grandfather’s friend. She falls pregnant and the child is adopted. **1970**

Her grandfather throws her out of the house. Aileen lives in the woods. **1971**

Having spent some time as a prostitute, Aileen marries, then divorces. **1976**

After many run-ins with the law, Aileen moves in with Tyria Moore.

Aileen shoots her first victim, convicted rapist Richard Mallory. **1989**



19 NOVEMBER 1990

WALTER ANTONIO, 62

Location: Dixie County

A security industry man whose body was found on a logging road naked, barring his socks. He had been shot four times and his car was found five days later in Brevard County.



12 SEPTEMBER 1990

CHARLES HUMPHREYS, 56

Location: Marion County

The widow of this former police chief, Shirley, went on TV to talk about Aileen meeting 'Old Sparky'. Humphreys had been shot six times and his car was found in Suwanee County.



4 AUGUST 1990

TROY BURRELL, 50

Location: Marion County

A delivery worker reported missing on 31 July, this time found fully clothed in a wooded part of the county, along State Road 19. He had sustained two bullet wounds.

BODY NEVER FOUND



4 JULY 1990

PETER SIEMS, 65

Location: Marion County

The missionary's body was never found, though his abandoned car was. Tellingly, Wuornos's palm print was found on the inside of the handle.



6 JUNE 1990

CHARLES CARSKADDON, 40

Location: Pasco County

A part-time rodeo worker whose body was once again found naked in the woods. He had been shot no less than nine times with a small-calibre pistol.

“ SHE WAS THE ANTITHESIS OF WHAT THE MEDIA STILL SAYS A WOMAN SHOULD BE — PLIANT AND BEAUTIFUL ”

If that were the end of Aileen's tale, she might still be here today. It has been commented by Broomfield that during her trial she was “medically described” as being “too immature to properly grasp the finality of death.”

Instead, she simply kept going. It's impossible to know what to believe next. What we do know is that the killings happened in the aftermath of the gay rights revolution. Along with this, courtesy of theorist Judith Butler, came the theory of gender as something that is performed and the idea that we play social roles to make ourselves understood. Having progressed from giggled 'favours' for ciggies and food to shotgun rape, Aileen's behaviour changed as she found a whole new audience, not least herself.

In one version of events, she simply snapped: the first assault became too much to bear and she killed six men after the first murder to enact her own personal revenge for earlier experiences, over and over and over again. In the

other version, she became Aileen the Warrior Queen: a Joan of Arc-style figure who charged hotrods in order to stack up the lines of dollars that would help her and Tyria fight their way to a new life. At the same time, she would avenge all womanhood by hunting down any guy who attempted to get beyond his station, particularly if this involved using rape as a weapon of on-woman war.

The argument demonstrated by director and writer Patty Jenkins' Academy Award-winning movie *Monster* is perhaps closest to the Aileen seen in court and Nick Broomfield's documentary footage. This Aileen has humour but is righteous about what she did. However, the confusing image we retain of Aileen is no doubt complicated by the constellation of scene-stealing extras, including Arlene

RIGHT The house of Dawn Botkins, close childhood friend to Wuornos. She inherited all Aileen's worldly possessions



BLOOD AND BULLETS

SHE STOLE THEIR CARS, OFTEN LEFT THEM NAKED AND MADE SURE SHE FILLED THEM WITH ENOUGH LEAD TO KILL THEM

THE LAST RESORT BAR

Location: Port Orange

Aileen had her last drink here as a free woman before she was arrested at the bar. It has since become a ghoulish tourist attraction of some international renown. The bar was also featured in the movie about Aileen's life, *Monster*.

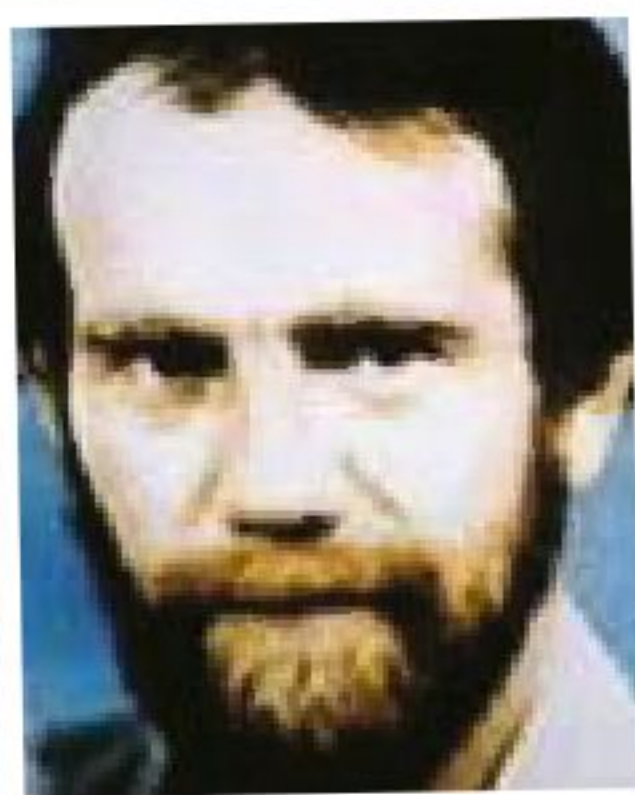


13 DECEMBER 1989

RICHARD MALLORY, 51

Location: Volusia County

Found fully clothed and shot twice. Wuornos's first killing was claimed as self defence during rape. A plausible defence, considering Mallory was a convicted rapist.



1 JUNE 1990

DAVID SPEARS, 43

Location: Citrus County

A construction worker, found naked apart from his baseball cap along Florida's Highway 19. In a similar case of murderous overkill, he had been shot six times.

Pralle, the woman who adopted Aileen after her case hit the papers and played a large part in the crucible of her later acts.

AILEEN AND REALITY

Just as Aileen's own testimony changes depending on whom she's talking to (and, presumably, how she wants them to react), it's also important to remember that documentaries such as Broomfield's are not necessarily any more of a true picture of her mental state than the fictionalisations such as the biographic movie *Monster*. Broomfield uses the reflexive

mode of cinema, wherein his film narration talks through the process of making his movies and the things that can go wrong in production rather than just showcasing his subjects. It is sometimes considered a more honest approach than showing documentary films as polished products rather than gritty reality, but it also highlights the conceit at the heart of his representation of Aileen – barring one segment in which we cannot see her face, she constantly references her own representation, looks into the camera and shows that she knows she's being both watched and judged by the audience. She's not being the 'real' her, so we can't judge the films as proper representations of her personality, sanity or insanity.

What's more, Broomfield cuts his footage of Aileen to represent her differently across his two different documentaries, separate products he will sell as part of his job (one now playing on the paid-for streaming service, Netflix, more than a decade after its release). A key sequence shows him interviewing Aileen about her adopted mother, Arlene, and her lawyer, Steve. The sequence focuses on the segment where Aileen rants and repeats herself, boggle eyed and fingers jabbing, about the legal weighting accorded to the principle of self-defence versus importance of the number of people killed. She looks mentally unstable and thus suitable for Broomfield's final comment that justice has not been served through the punishment by execution of someone unable to comprehend what they had done.

In Broomfield's other film, an extended version of the same interview is shown. Here, while the same gestures and expressions are present, Aileen also talks calmly about knowing that her two closest allies are using her as a prize heifer. We see only what Broomfield wants us to see, rather than what actually happens, a point brought up in the court itself as evidence. Furthermore, considering the enormity of Arlene and Steve's actions – demonstrated by Broomfield's footage to be the knowing emotional exploitation of a soon-to-be-executed rape victim for their own financial gain via payment for interviews – Aileen could be forgiven for being rather more angry than she appears. Her representation is not the truth, but an edited view of her suited to Broomfield's argument, as is the norm for any documentary no matter how honest it aims (or claims) to be.

RIGHTEOUS RAGE

Quieter moments suggest she had the capacity to be a relatively 'normal' individual who had suffered the most extraordinary and terrible of circumstances. As Dr Stephen Holmes, author of *Serial Murder*, told Real Crime: "Aileen Wuornos was a classic example of an individual that suffered from borderline personality and antisocial personality disorders. With these afflictions and her history of being abused both physically and emotionally as a child, it is no wonder she ended up in the position she was in."

Borderline personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder both sound menacing until one realises that 2.6 per cent of Americans were diagnosed with the condition as of 2007, according to a study published by the *Biological Psychiatry* journal. Living with mental ill health is a relatively common problem. Considering what she was up against, even the most saintly would rant and rave.

This, however, does not make for a good scandal. Instead, what we see is the image of Wuornos as the snaggle-toothed, ageing and bloated drow who raised her cuffed hands to her own neck (to tidy her hair) and who pulled grotesque faces (because she was tired).



“GOD HAS FORGIVEN HER FOR WHAT SHE’S DONE AND OUR STATE HAS THE DEATH PENALTY SO WHY NOT GO FOR IT, I MEAN, WOW! SHE COULD BE HOME WITH JESUS IN ANOTHER FEW YEARS”

ARLENE PRALLE



HIDDEN AGENDAS

FROM THE MOMENT OF HER CAPTURE, THE MEN AND WOMEN AROUND WUORNOS SHAPED THE SERIAL KILLER’S IMAGE

AILEEN WUORNOS (THE MONSTER)

Loathed lesbian, good-time girl, multiple murderess and Christian-adopted daughter. Aileen is convinced that the cops have used her to “clean up the streets” by killing curb crawlers. She willingly plays the role others have cast her in, but the ‘real Aileen’ is increasingly elusive.

RICHARD, DAVID, CHARLES C, PETER, TROY, CHARLES H AND WALTER (THE VICTIMS)

Aileen meets them on the freeway over the course of a year. They are normal men. They meet the lady on the highway and wind up sometimes naked and robbed, and always dead. Innocent victims in the wrong place at the wrong time, or curb-crawling abusers who finally got what was coming to them... it depends which narrative is currently in play.

ARLENE PRALLE (THE ADOPTIVE MOTHER)

Tiny, brunette and a born-again Christian, Arlene contacts Aileen (on Jesus’s say so) after seeing the story on TV. They exchange letters and Arlene adopts the murderess as her daughter. Arlene is convinced that Aileen should confess her sins and “go back to Jesus” via execution. She says this direct to the camera with a big, beaming smile on her face in *Aileen Wuornos: The Selling Of A Serial Killer*. Aileen apparently agrees with this and is shown smiling in a photo supposedly taken after she stated in court that she will happily die for killing in cold blood if that’s what the court wants.

NICK BROOMFIELD (THE FILM MAKER)

English, upright and with a shock of unkempt brown hair, Nick is the quintessentially honest documentary man looking to sell his ethically investigative film. Nick asks death-row inmate Aileen if she knows that Arlene has asked for more money to talk about her daughter’s impending death, but Aileen calmly waves him quiet. Her subsequent lines show that she knows Arlene and her lawyer-musician-ex-hippy-with-an-invisible-friend Steve have allegedly been telling her to kill herself already because Arlene can’t take the strain of the her adopted daughter’s trials.



R'S STATION

GOVERNOR JEB BUSH (THE WHITE HOUSE WANNABE)

Bush, Nick argues, is riding the back of Aileen's execution chair as his ticket to re-election. Bush's prison psychiatrists, Broomfield states, take a whole 15 minutes to declare the ranting, raving and clearly paranoid prisoner sane, making her 'no contest' confession to murder kosher. Aileen is scared the prison government are trying to drive her insane so that no one will believe her about the corrupt cops selling her story to Hollywood. Now in the running for Republican Presidential candidate, Bush's role may be due a reassessment.

TYRIA MOORE (AILEEN'S EX-GIRLFRIEND)

They lived together in a motel for years, Aileen stating that 'Ty' told her to keep turning tricks to make sure she had more money. Ty's taped phone call to Aileen was the confession used to catch her and manoeuvre Moore into her own movie deal.

CAPTAIN BINEGAR, SERGEANT MUNSTER AND MAJOR DAN HENRY (THE COPS)

While some of the USA's finest are accused by Aileen of spying on her for years, these guys' boss will broadcast a statement saying that they have been found guilty of selling their stake in Aileen's story to the highest bidders.

**“A GREAT
MAJORITY OF
FLORIDIANS WANT
THEIR GOVERNOR
TO DO THIS”**

JEB BUSH



ABOVE After her first death sentence, Aileen is led away to be tried for each and every one of the remaining victims

We cannot know who she truly was because everything about her prosecution and depiction was inherently motivated by politics, both of government and the media. She was the antithesis of what the media still says a woman should be – pliant and beautiful, especially if blessed with accepted standards of good looks, such as her blonde hair. It was as if the media were offended by her image alone; in comic-strip coverage she was shown as a beautiful, shapely (near naked) young streetwalker before the murders, and as an aggressive and androgynous convict in their next frame. As Broomfield's *Selling Of A Serial Killer* reports, news outlets directly linked the seriousness of her crimes to her gender, and she and Tyria were instantly dubbed 'Angels of Death' who added "an even more chilling twist to the slaying" by "murdering with the feminine touch" in the otherwise standard, gun-based crimes. Aileen was demonised in order to be exorcised for being too 'unnatural'.

This may explain her final filmed behaviour in an interview with Nick Broomfield. When she thought the cameras stopped rolling, she commented that she had committed most of the murders in self-defence but was pleading guilty because she couldn't stand being in prison anymore. When Broomfield challenged her on this in their

final interview, she refused to comment and demanded to talk about the police and prison guards, mixing the fact of their corruption with ramblings about surveillance and poisoning. She may have believed this and wanted justice, or simply said it to make the public hate her more so as not to prolong her prison stay.

Aileen's last words reflect the life she was denied. She spoke of meeting Christ as well as going in a spaceship in the same way as her heroes from the movies. She also pronounced that she would be back. She perhaps chose to believe in just about anything that remained within the grasp of her tattered sanity – a religion of the truly lost.

Her story reads like a cheap paperback fantasy but it is horribly real. What remains of Aileen are documentaries, press clippings, letters and faux-fascinated compare-and-contrast memes matching her to the beautiful Hollywood actress who 'uglied up' to play her. Aileen Wuornos was a multiple murderer who robbed her victims and shot them more times than was necessary to aid her escape. We will, however, never know how situations played out or comprehend how the bright-eyed, flossy-haired little girl wound up a bulge-eyed woman washing herself in public toilets and thankful for any human contact that came in her direction. We do know how her eventual death sentence was executed as much by ballot box and media ratings as by lethal injection: she was killed at 947am on 9 October 2002.

"I'll be sailing away with the rock. I'll be back with Jesus Christ like on *Independence Day*. On June sixth. Just like the movie on the big mothership. I'll be back. I'll be back."

“ SHE PERHAPS CHOSE TO BELIEVE IN JUST ABOUT ANYTHING THAT REMAINED WITHIN THE GRASP OF HER TATTERED SANITY ”

AILEEN'S MANY CONFESSIONS

DURING THE COURSE OF HER INITIAL ARREST AND IMPRISONMENT THROUGH TO HER MURDER TRIALS, AILEEN WUORNOS MADE MULTIPLE CONFESSIONS ABOUT HER VARIOUS CRIMES

"Listen, do what you gotta do... I'm not gonna let you go to jail... listen, if I have to confess, I will"

COURT APPEARANCE IN 1992

A taped telephone conversation between Aileen and ex-girlfriend Tyria is played to court. It was a set-up and Ty talks Aileen into taking sole responsibility for the crimes. She does, implicating herself while painting a florid portrait of Moore as an innocent and the only kindness in the killer's ugly world. This is a very different Aileen from the one we expect, but this glimmer of redemption – love and selflessness – is instead distorted and repurposed to feed a different narrative, that of the man-hating lesbian she-devil.

AFTER HER FIRST TRIAL AND PRIOR TO SENTENCING FOR HUMPHREYS', SPEARS' AND BURRESS'S DEATHS

Aileen had been persuaded to plead guilty by her newly adopted, born-again Christian mother Arlene, as a supposed show of religious devotion. The sincerity of this newfound faith is contested, but it's a natural fit. Wuornos's world is one of saviours and tormentors, and by coaching her admission in the language of repentance and sacrifice, she subtly recasts herself not as a sinner, but a saint.

"I have made peace with my Lord and I have asked forgiveness. I am sorry that my acts of self-defence ended up in court like this, but I take full responsibility for my actions. It was them or me. I am sorry for all the pain that my actions have caused. I am prepared to die if you say it is necessary"

"I'll be up in heaven while y'all are rotting in hell... I know I was raped and you aren't nothing but a bunch of scum... putting someone who was raped to death?"

30 JANUARY 1992, ON BEING SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR THE MURDERS OF HUMPHREYS, SPEARS, AND BURRESS

Broomfield believes Aileen expected some clemency owing to self-defence. She was outraged at the "immorality" of being handed more death sentences, taking the tone of the righteous, wronged to the point of fury. Few hearts, however, softened as she hurled abuse at the judge and jury. This outburst became a media money shot, repeated ad infinitum to emphasise her volatile nature and white-trash barbarism at the expense of her perceived injustice.

SPOKEN DIRECT TO NICK BROOMFIELD'S CAMERA AFTER TEN YEARS ON DEATH ROW

A confession and show of aggression to provoke prison governors into signing her execution warrant. Still the snarling, spitting monster of news reports and newspaper headlines, Wuornos rants and raves as is expected of her, suggesting that any death, no matter whose, will satisfy her. The truth is far sadder...

"I want to get in the fucking chamber tomorrow and leave... I'm on hold with my execution... and they're just daring me to kill again... you mother fuckers keep fucking with my goddam execution, there's gonna be bloodshed!"

"I can't do it. I would never be able to handle a life sentence or anything... that's why I can't say nothing about self-defence on tape or anything... I can't tell anybody. Never"

SECONDS LATER IN THE SAME INTERVIEW AND SPOKEN WHEN SHE THOUGHT THE CAMERAS WERE OFF

Aileen appears to admit her guilty plea is to avoid the doom of a lifetime in prison. This moment of apparent sincerity comes with one caveat: for a woman who won't "say nothing about self-defence on tape," she's certainly mentioned it a lot.

GRANNY RIPPER

IN THE DARKEST DAYS OF 2015, TAMARA SAMSONOVA SIMMERED A SAUCEPAN ON HER STOVE IN HER KITCHEN. INSIDE IT, BOILING AWAY, WAS THE SEVERED HEAD OF ONE OF HER 11 ALLEGED VICTIMS

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON

The Slavic people in the regions of Russia tell tales of the crone, Tamara Samsonova. Hers is a modern day reworking of the adventures of Baba Yaga, the mythological creature, perhaps a witch, who killed and (some say) ate her victims, placing their skulls on the posts of her home. Baba Yaga still looms large over the family fireside, a caution to adventurous children, but in Samsonova's real-life case, it is the adults who should have been more wary. The murderous madam did not care to hold her temper when she thought others had contravened acceptable standards of courtesy, and she would set her society on the straight and narrow, even if it meant killing the discourteous – roughly translated as anyone who annoyed her.

THE ORIGINS OF BABA YAGA

Samsonova is much like the historic Miss Yaga, an enchantress associated with crows, cats, snakes and toads. Sure enough, she has the glinting quick eyes of a bird on the search for its next tasty morsel. Sure enough, snakelike is her hair – the wild waves of an old woman who has no need for fashion and cares primarily for function. Baba Yaga is said to live on the edge of villages in a hut mounted upon bone-like chicken legs – a superiorly strange sight to the law-abiding good folk of the town. It seems somewhat fitting, therefore, that one of the key images we have of Samsonova sees her descending the ghostly white knobbly banister of her apartment while calmly carrying her prey.

Her poor quarry in this instance was her former lodger, Valentina Ulanova, the victim a similarly traceable part of our historic anti-heroine's saga. Baba's true face in Russia is that of many a matriarch, for she is clever and can be caring as

well as cruel. Indeed, the original folk tales state that Baba is sought out for advice by the brave or just blindly unwary, for when help or gain is available, it comes at a cost.

Samsonova was quite literally caught between caring for and curing her charges. Her crimes were only discovered when dogs sniffed out the corpse of her former lodger. Ulanova, 79, had requested lodging from the younger woman, together with her accompanying personal care, for the price of a rosy Ruble's rent. Tamara was happy to acquiesce if her house was 'kept' – the washing up done by her tenant. Unfortunately for Samsonova, Ulanova refused to touch even a teacup.

THE LOVERS GRIMM

So adamant was Valentina that she would not lift a finger. She perhaps felt herself to have outwitted the witch as she swore she would leave if pushed further – she knew the lonely lady had grown to love her in some way. Unfortunately, this led Samsonova to change tact by reducing the need for the cups in the first place. As has been reported, Tamara tipped an overdose of the sleeping pill Phenazepamum into her companion's cup, sending her into a deep slumber. The rest would be eternal for Valentina.

Finding her well-fed companion too weighty to move, Samsonova borrowed tools from her neighbours and

RIGHT 68-year-old Tamara Samsonova is suspected of killing up to 11 people over two decades. She has explained her crimes in detail to Russian authorities, going as far as re-enacting how she cut up one of her victims with a model dummy



RIGHT At a court hearing, Samsonova told a judge: “I am guilty and I deserve to be punished”. She later blew a kiss to the court reporters. When the judge announced that she would be kept in custody, she clapped her hands and smiled

dismembered the unfortunate Valentina still alive. The doughty dame dispatched the larger woman bit by bit in bags and popped her body (minus the head) next to the pond of the Dimitrova Street district of old Saint Petersburg. The Investigative Committee, Russia’s serious crime unit, commented that organs had been removed, leading to the whisper that the wicked woman had consumed the choicest cuts of Valentina and, indeed, some of her other charges. It certainly didn’t help her case that she was seen removing what is thought to have been the divine Valentina’s carefully separated head in a relatively large cooking pot, presumably so as not to spill its most particular juices.

It reportedly took this dangerous domestic goddess two hours to prepare and dispatch the petrifying mixture. She set flesh from sinew and blood from bone to hide the tracks that were her own, all while her neighbours slept sound around her. A scary tale indeed, only it did not end there. When sniffer dogs found the pieces of her paramour, more bodies came to light. Two lodgers had been cut up in lieu (said Tamara) of the time when she tired of their company.

Her husband, forgone conclusion though this may have been, has been beyond sight since she reported him missing in 2005, though his body (if that is all that remains of him) has never been found. A businessman, bereft of his arms and legs, also lost his head to her upon their meeting 12 years ago.

BLACK ARTS AND TEA LEAVES

Upon the discovery of her alleged crimes, it became clear that Samsonova really was thought of as something of a witch, and this had perhaps led to her activities. Among her possessions were found books on black magic and astrology, next to her personal notebooks that detailed her dark deeds. They demonstrated that she could speak several tongues – French and German – and even seemed to take grim delight in recording her vile cookery experiments alongside her thoughts on more recognisable elevents (disappointingly straying from magical fare, she was a coffee drinker rather than a tea leaf reader). A horrific hostess, she even provided disposal advice, with one of her diary entries allegedly stating: “I killed my tenant Volodya, cut him to pieces in the bathroom with a knife and put the pieces of his body in



SLAVIC SLASHER CELEBRITIES

THE DEAD RED RIPPER’S SHADOW STILL STALKS — AND APPEARED IN MURDEROUS SAMSONOVA’S SICK MIND

Andrei Chikatilo is reported to have been a direct influence on Tamara Samsonova’s grisly crimes, according to one of her neighbours. Like Samsonova, Chikatilo hails from the Slavic region and, like her, he had a respectable job and was at points integrated into society through his work as a teacher. However, known variously as The Butcher of Rostov, The Ripper of Rostov and The Red Ripper, he stole the lives of more than 52 women and children as well as assaulting them and mutilating their bodies. He, like Samsonova, had a penchant for removing parts of his victims’ corpses, with their eyes and other facial features being a firm favourite.

Chikatilo enjoyed his awful activities and played to the press, often posing with a smile and apparently proud of his notoriety. He was assessed for psychiatric disorders but found to be legally sane. He was executed by a firing squad in 1990.



Samsonova’s neighbour has said that she was “very interested” in serial killer Andrei Chikatilo

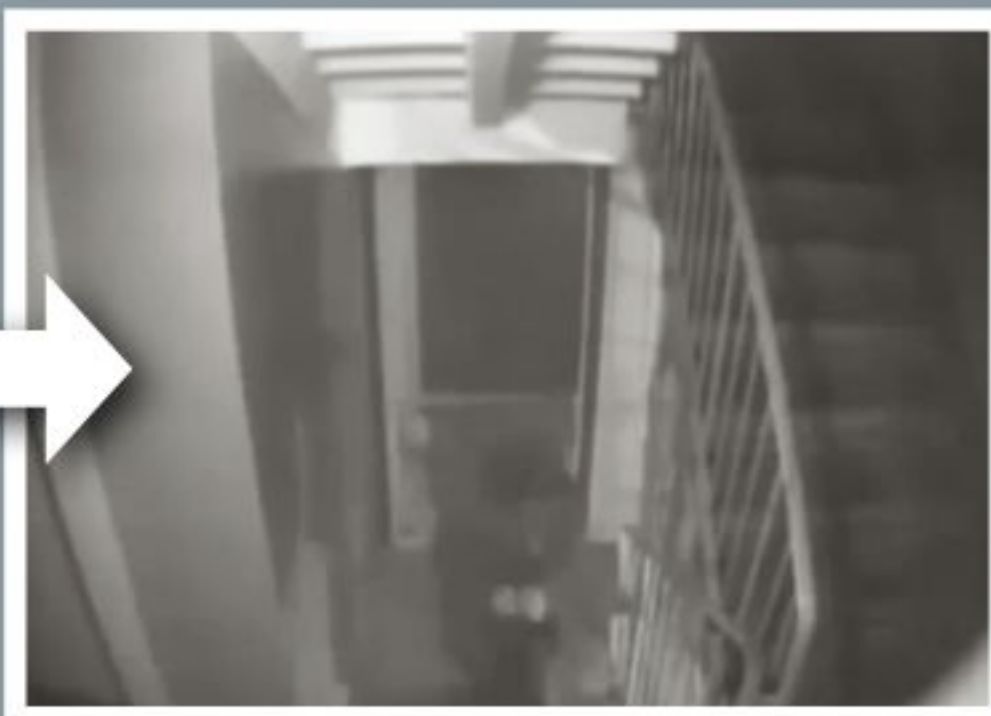
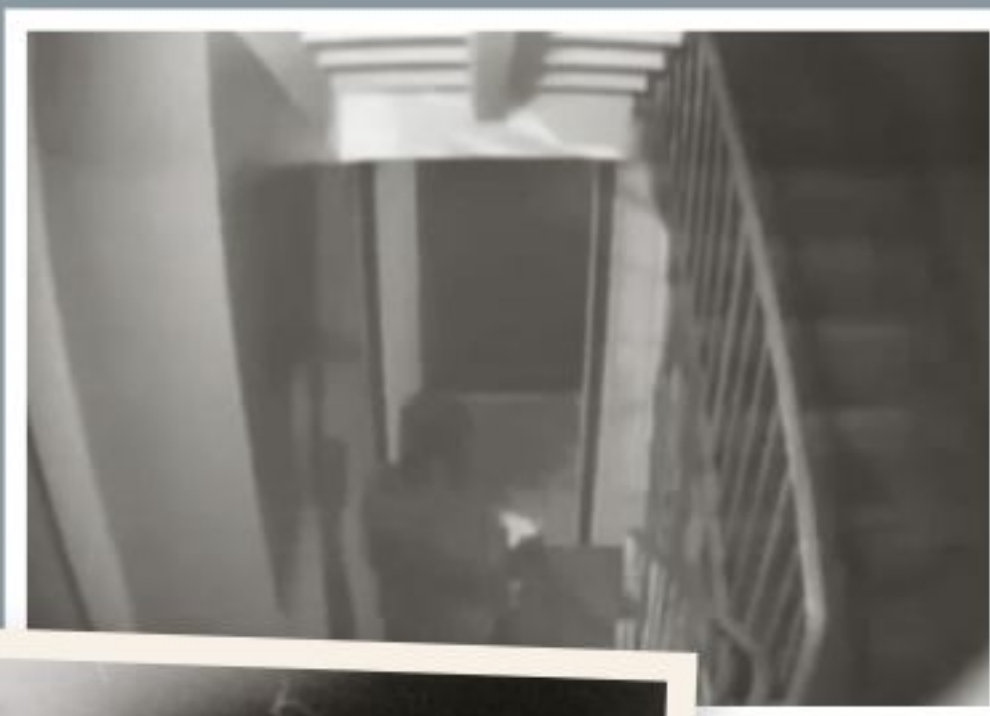
TAMARA'S TRASH TRUDGE

REMARKABLE CCTV IMAGES SHOW THE RIPPER GRAN DISPOSING OF HER VICTIM'S BODY IN BAGS AND A 'BOIL' POT



25-07-2015 02.21
Wearing a rather fetching and easily identifiable blue overcoat, Samsonova lugs the heavy-looking bin bag of remains out of the door. She then straightens her back before turning to lock the entrance firmly behind her. She appears to be the epitome of elderly security-consciousness.

25-07-2015 03.02
The grotesque 'granny' (wearing a rather handsome headscarf) can be seen getting rid of the household waste of a witch. She is presumably keeping the place neat and tidy in conscientious consideration of the neighbour coming down the stairs – it is surely her civil duty, after all.



25-07-2015 03.54
Ablly lugging the awkward bags down several flights of stairs, the sprightly senior returns for her all-important saucepan containing a gory gruel – her victim's head. She positions her thumbs carefully over the lid so as not to drop, or slop, its cadaverous contents.

“ SHE SET FLESH FROM SINEW AND BLOOD FROM BONE TO HIDE THE TRACKS THAT WERE HER OWN ”

plastic bags and threw them away in the different parts of Frunzensky district.”

FEARFUL FANTASY

Only, like in most fairy stories, there is more than just a sprinkle of fantasy in this feisty lady's claims. The fabled cannibalism is just that – it is an assumption based on the absence of Valentina's and the other victims' body parts, which (it has been commented) was most likely for reasons of identity concealment rather than Samsonova's alleged taste for human tartare. Of the male lodgers that she claims to have 'offed', one has miraculously resurfaced, very much alive and is now a key witness in her case – a voice against a possibly loathed landlady, rather than a wicked witch. Her diary claims seem as much the result of a mundane life and a bored mind than a malicious maleficent and it has been reported that she spent several months in psychiatric care prior to her arrest.

Indeed, here seems a lady happy to make her own legend and neighbours report that she had an active interest in the

case of Soviet serial killer the 'Red Ripper' Andrei Chikatilo, who murdered and ate at least 53 in the 70s through to the 90s, before he was caught, tried and executed. She supposedly collected many news clippings recounting his infamy. Perhaps seeing her life as a story of old, she told her trial judge: "I was getting ready for this court action for dozens of years. It was all done deliberately. With this last murder I closed the chapter. I'm guilty and I deserve to be punished." She then blew kisses to eager reporters, perhaps in case they should fail to spot her star appeal. She seems, somewhat disturbingly, more a Granny Proto-stripper than a female Jack the Ripper and has made herself most available to the appropriate authorities. Ever a performer, she has been most obliging in showing just how she desiccated her victims using a model, captured on video specially to record her moment.

If convicted, then Samsonova could face the death penalty. If the morals murmured by the myths of long ago speak true of the alignment of the stars of this new serial killer, the question might not be if she will face a Russian firing squad, but when.

© Corbis; TopFoto; Alamy



VOODOO GODMOTHER

THE SKIN WAS CLEAR, THE FEATURES STRONG AND THE EYES SET DEAD AHEAD AS THE RITUAL SMOKE ROSE AROUND THEM. THE ONLOOKERS (SEEKING THEIR HEARTS' DESIRES) WERE TERRIFIED. IT WAS A FEELING AS HEADY AS THE DRUG-TRAFFICKED HIGHS THE FIGURE'S 'MAGIC' WOULD CREATE

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON





ABOVE Sara Maria Aldrete was given the name 'La Madrina', which means 'the godmother' in Spanish, by Adolfo Constanzo when she joined his cult

LEFT Neighbours dare not enter the former home of Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo, as they claim it is hexed

Sara Aldrete is a woman of contradictions. With the body of an Amazon, this blonde bombshell stands at over 1.8 metres tall and was a star student at her college. When classes finished, however, she would drive across the border to Mexico to become La Madrina – High Priestess of the Narcosatanica drug cartel cult. Together with her former lover Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo, she led rituals torturing then cooking human sacrifices to protect the henchmen who shipped their organisation's marijuana far and wide. Convicted in 1990, Sara claims she was actually held prisoner and forced into participation while Constanzo led the rites, but former friends were later freaked out when remembering her knowledge of the occult long before the brains hit the pan.

HUBBLE BUBBLE, DOUBLE TROUBLE!

Sara grew up in Matamoros, a border town between Mexico and the USA. She lived at home with her parents but would cross into Brownsville each day to study at Texas Southmost College. Sara was not ordinary, but above average – she was on the honour roll for achieving good grades, had won the school's Outstanding Physical Education Award, taught aerobics and still found time to work for the college administration to boost the financial aid that she was getting to support her studies. Her fellow students and teachers (including an anthropology professor who taught on religious rituals) found her to be a good girl and totally dedicated. It's a wonder that she didn't also breed cute puppies, so wholesome was her image at the time.

But as Former Deputy Sheriff George Gavito commented, it wasn't unusual for students on the border to have different lives either side of it: "Sara would cross that border to Mexico and she would become somebody else," he said. She was a resident alien with permission to be in both countries. It was later noticed that for someone on financial aid, she always left campus in a new car that was equipped with what newspapers at the time reported as "a cellular phone", practically unheard of in 1989. Sara was getting money and, it seemed, maybe more, from someone or somewhere else.

Mexico is joined to the land of the free, but it's not all prosperity. The capital city is dominated by the Metropolitan cathedral, the oldest and largest in Latin America. It is a blazing sun of gold and the religious icons of the virgin and child, surrounded by the saints. In the bustling city centre, emporiums are filled with expensive religious paraphernalia, from statues of the blessed Mary to church-sized bells so that shoppers can recreate the experience of the holy house at home. Step outside of the main streets, however, and it's a different story. The opulence promptly dissolves into run-down avenues, which are nevertheless littered with beautiful, wind-kissed shrines. The tourist pamphlets advise travellers to stick to the main straits to avoid corrupt police or being kidnapped for small ransoms by unregulated taxi firms. In places where poverty looms at the door, people seek deliverance, either by a God or by drugs that are used to blot out desperation – in Mexico, the two may go hand in hand.

TWISTERED SISTER

Sara may have desired to escape the drab surroundings of her life – a shotgun wedding that had taken place when she was little more than a child. To weather the hurricane of her emotions, she followed the yellow dust road to the drama of danger and the lair of Adolfo Constanzo. A career criminal, he had noticed that Sara dated one of his rivals and had links to the infamous Hernandez cartel, so he initiated a meeting with her. Perhaps if she could be persuaded to worship at his altar, he could convince her of her own ability to have power over his men.

Adolfo's intense charisma was an immediate attraction for the young girl. His self-belief may well have been inbuilt by his lineage, for his family had practiced Santeria – a form of occultism or witchcraft – for years. It claims to be the real deal rather than the type of illusion associated with stage magic. Occultism can in theory be white or black, good or bad, or any number of grey areas in the middle. It depends on how it is used and, of course, there is huge debate as to whether or not it works. What it can definitely do is bestow an air of mystery on the practitioner that can make them – or the idea of the magic they claim to be able to do – irresistible to those who are looking for something missing in their own lives. Whether or not occultists have supernatural powers becomes immaterial because they can change people's behaviour if those people believe their behaviour can be changed. Add this 'power' to the fact that Adolfo was also handsome, and it's not hard to see how Sara fell for him, and he is said to have taught her how to control death itself.



ABOVE Adolfo Constanzo, 'the godfather of Matamoros', introduced Sara to witchcraft and dark magic, eventually making her the high priestess of his cult

SOCIETY SORCERESS

The glamour of witchcraft was increased because the cult was dealing with some very powerful people. Various kinds of occultism are popular in South America and, just like with religion, believers come from all corners of society. The who's who of Mexico, from police to politicians and famous celebrities, would visit 'El Padrino' – the Godfather Adolfo and his sorcerer, Sara. They would sign their names in the book that contained the arcane symbols that were the workings for all of the rituals. This formality done, the seekers would explain their innermost wishes – 'inner' being the operative word, as Adolfo specialised in human sacrifice. He'd 'developed' the Santeria shown him by his ancestors, crossing it with Palo Mayombe-style sacrificial practices from the Congo. It's common in folk magick across the world to place things, including precious metals and animal parts, representing the aim of the spell into a container before performing a ritual to give it power. Lucky rabbit's foot charms are a remnant of this practice, but Adolfo switched beast for human. If he wanted to prepare a strength potion for a client, he would add human muscle to his pot or nganga. Seeking renewed vitality? That would require the sacrifice

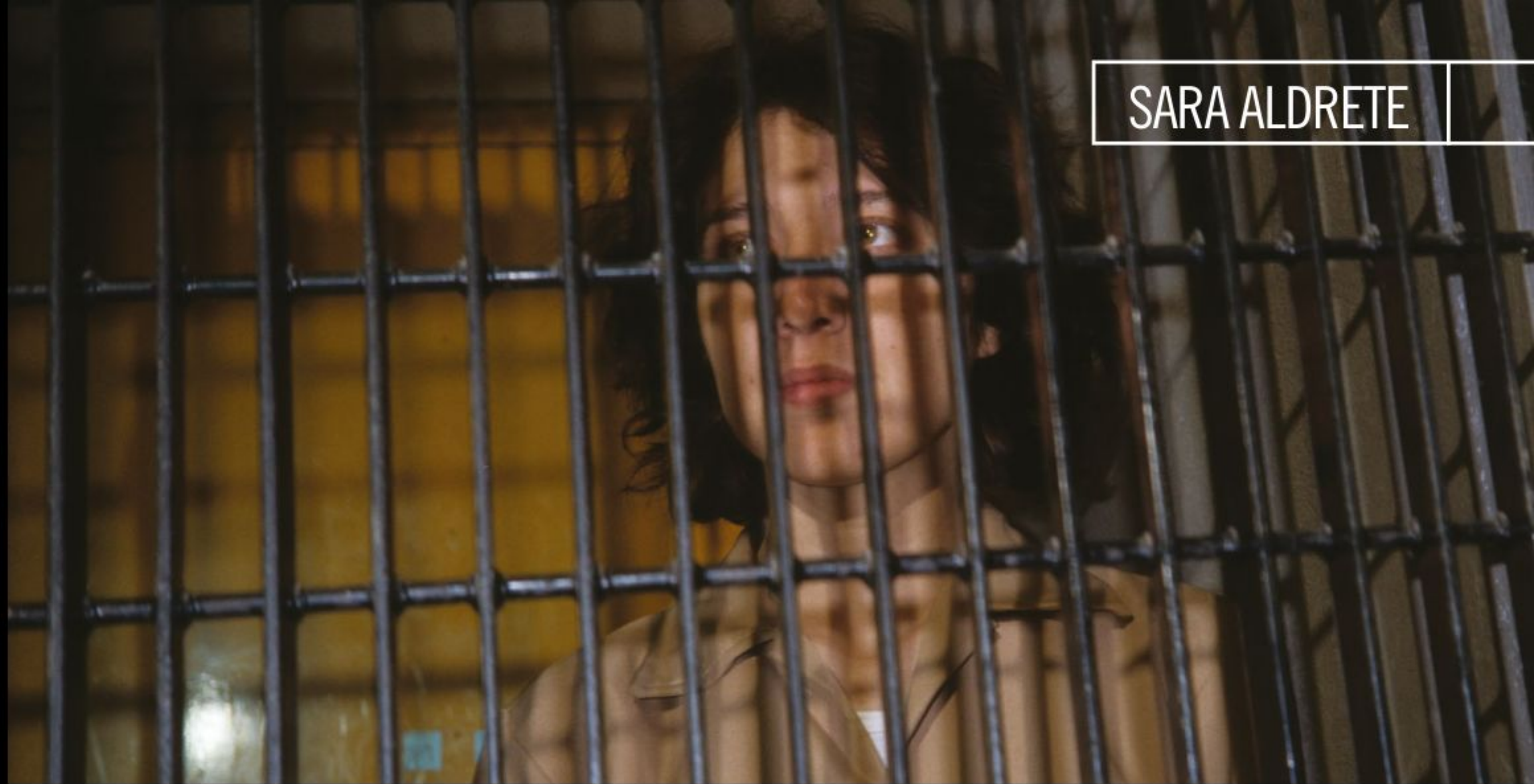
“IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE HOW SARA FELL FOR ADOLFO, AND HE IS SAID TO HAVE TAUGHT HER HOW TO CONTROL DEATH ITSELF”



ABOVE More than a dozen bodies were found in multiple graves at the cult site, including that of missing college student Mark Kilroy

RIGHT TOP Aldrete was given a six-year prison sentence in 1990 for criminal association, but in 1994 she was convicted of multiple murders and given a further 62 years in prison

RIGHT BOTTOM When police raided Adolfo's ranch, they found this caldron containing bones, a turtle shell, the head and claws of a rooster, a goat's head and a horseshoe



SARA ALDRETE



This ritually sacrificed chicken was also found when police raided Adolfo's ranch

WHICH WITCH?

THE NARCOSATANICA CULT FUSED DIFFERENT OCCULT TRADITIONS. THESE INCLUDED:

SANTERIA

Africa

Originating in the Yoruba religion of Africa, it is a worship of that land's elemental spirits, or Orisha, disguised as Roman Catholic saints. It was brought to America by Yoruba slaves who wished to honour their traditional practices without their masters' knowledge.

Its practices include fortune telling and the use of trance, drumming and dance as a means to communicate with their ancestors. Initiated priests and priestesses may also ritually sacrifice animals during the ceremonies. Santeria was originally an insulting term meaning 'saint' that was used by the slave masters to indicate the slaves' supposedly easy conversion to Christianity. Practitioners prefer to call their religion Regla de Ocha or 'Reign of the Orishas'.

PALO MAYOMBE

The Congo

Developed in the Spanish Empire among Central African slaves who had come from the Congo region, this belief system holds that natural objects called nganga – particularly sticks – may possess powers that are often linked to the spirits of the dead. It is believed that these spirits may be summoned through rituals for assistance or guidance. Rituals can often use objects such as bone, including those from humans, and the practice has been connected with grave robbing in Venezuela and New Jersey in the United States of America. Other, less controversial aspects of the system include battle dancing and music. However, not all practitioners of Palo Mayombe use human remains, or indeed any objects that are connected with crime.

BRUJERIA

Latin America

This practice has a focus on divination – the attempt to find hidden information. It uses methods including astrology, fortune telling and necromancy – communication with the dead. Focused on the spirits of nature, it also includes the use of substances such as mushrooms, peyote and coca to induce religious visions and altered mental states. While it has a focus on the use of spells and potions to create effects, practitioners may also provide curanderismo, a healing system.

“ BLOODIED WALLS, BURN MARKS ON THE FLOOR, AN ALTAR AND CANDLES WERE FOUND BY POLICE WHEN THEY RAIDED THE LITTLE BEDROOM SARA KEPT IN HER PARENTS’ HOME ”



of a young child or maybe even a newborn babe. Corpses missing hearts, brains and vertebrae were found buried in the grounds of the Narcosatanica's ritual shack.

Trade was swift, but sustained money in the Mexican underworld meant drugs. The cult's next mission was to plan how to keep their trafficking mules out of sight of the police, and for this they needed brains. Several acolytes were sent to a street popular with spring-breaking students for its cheap drinks and thriving nightlife. There they chanced upon Mark Kilroy, a bright medical student and all-round good American. He was kidnapped on a side road, taken to the ritual hut and murdered.

The publicity surrounding this final murder led to the police seeking out the hut.

Justice had been unable to apprehend the gang largely because, according to Former Deputy Sheriff Gavito, many Mexican police believe in magick just as much as the civilians do. For those officers, it must have felt like a trip to Oz to venture off to see the great and terrible cult leader and return with the wizard's head as bounty for their defiance.

Gavito, a large, animated man who had years of experience on the force, was on the expedition himself. He knew that people were shielding the cultists out of fear that armies of followers, probably propelled by the flames of hell itself, would wing their way to anyone who tried to stop them. Gavito knew those wings would have to be clipped. Picking up his own trusty plastic wand, he dialled the magic number of the media to debunk the deluded drug devotees.

That afternoon, a team of police pulled back the curtain on the secretive world of Narcosatanica. They, like Sara, followed the yellow dust road to a little shack with a green roof surrounded by a tumble down wooden fence. Unlike Sara, and advancing with the power of logic, they set fire to one of the ritual pots that had been left outside. A dragon screech of flame engulfed the building. Neither demon nor henchman materialised and the lie of the couple's invincibility was caught on film and beamed to television sets across the land. It didn't matter if magick was possible or not, Adolfo's was not strong enough to defeat Mexican law, and he went on the run, taking Sara with him.

ABOVE Aldrete has spoken from prison about her experience with the Narcosatanica, and she maintains her innocence regarding the murder charges



The bodies dug up after the discovery of Constanzo's ranch had all been mutilated in different ways

SARA'S SANTERIA SEDUCTION SPELL?

MANY OCCULT PRACTITIONERS ARE FAMOUSLY SECRETIVE ABOUT THEIR RITUALS, BUT A LOT OF THE SAME INGREDIENTS ARE USED IN MAGIC ACROSS THE WORLD. SORCERESS SARA COULD HAVE USED A POTION LIKE THIS TO BEND A RIVAL DRUG TRAFFICKER TO HER WILL

LEMON JUICE

Associated with the Sun, a zing of magical lemon may bestow growth and self-confidence needed for that daunting first date.

ROCK CANDY

Surely every love spell should contain sugary things for your intended sweetheart?

COOKING OIL

While ingredients may vary, oil is often just used to cook the other ingredients together.

A BLACK DOVE

While white doves are a symbol of peace, a black dove may symbolise restlessness.

MENSTRUAL BLOOD

Blood is vital to life, sustaining the body. Menstrual blood carries additional meanings associated with pregnancy.

MERCURY

The element that changes with its environment is often associated with learning. Good for 'getting to know you'.

NEEDLES

Metal is often associated with persistence, and needles might be used to make the intended 'heart sore' for the spellcaster.

EARTHWORMS

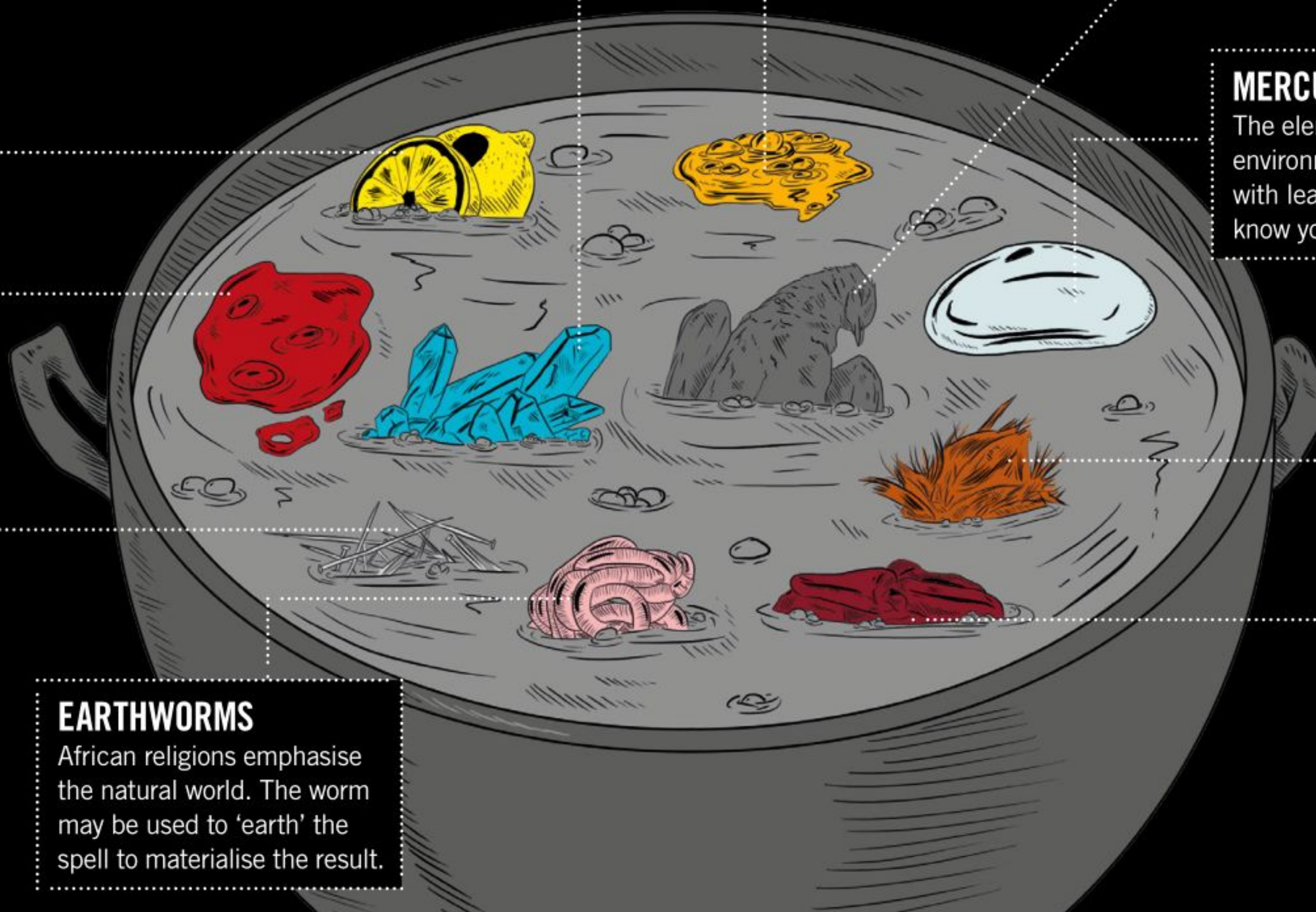
African religions emphasise the natural world. The worm may be used to 'earth' the spell to materialise the result.

HAIR

Hair and other body parts are popped in the pot to represent people and, thanks to DNA, genetically tie someone to the spell.

RED WINE

Red is associated with the beating heart of romance, while wine may rob the mind enough to let the body be persuaded.



Sara, Adolfo and other key cult members were later cornered by police. Adolfo chose death over prison and was shot by one of his followers. Sara was taken into custody.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

"I want to see my father," Sara said at her arraignment. She claimed that Constanzo had forced her to go into hiding with him and that she had known of the murders only through TV reports. Furthermore, she asked that her apologies be conveyed to Mark Kilroy's family, and co-cultist Alvaro de Leon Valdez backed up her claim that she was not involved in the murders. That said, it's likely that she did want to click her heels and return to Matamoros, before the law did at any rate...

Bloodied walls, burn marks on the floor, an altar and candles were found by police when they raided the little bedroom Sara kept in her parents' home. Other stories began to surface. They had seemed like nothing but the innocent eccentricity of a smart but restless mind, but now they were sinister: school friends recalled the jewellery she had warned them not to touch lest it caused them harm and people remembered her repeated screenings of *The Believers*, a film about a cult that practices magick to gain wealth. Her friends only reconsidered in hindsight the moment that she stood up after a screening and spoke in a strange voice of occultism. She had interests in sacrificial magick and was with the cultists when she was found. If she

had ever 'looked behind the curtain' to see what Constanzo was really like prior to her arrest, she'd immediately closed her eyes again afterwards. Home was where her dark imaginings were and she was trapped there – she'd never really been away.

Sara was found not guilty on the charge of murdering Constanzo himself but she was initially sentenced to a six-year term for criminal association. She was subsequently sentenced to 62 years in prison for her part in the cult's other multiple murders. 11 years later, she released *Me Dicen La Narco Satanica*, a book detailing her side of the story. She has always maintained her innocence of the murders. She remains in prison where she continues to practice Santeria to this day.

A key aspect of belief is that the believer is participating for 'the right reasons', whether it is for self-development, the greater social good or just because they believe there is a force out there that is compelling them to do so. What has been left out of many reports is that the burned Narcosatanica ritual shack was subsequently blessed with a purification rite – a series of hand signals together with the sign of the cross and lashings of white powder. It was designed to evict the evil spirits that resided there and replace them with the protection of another invisible force – the Christian God. In other areas, crime scenes are made safe by police tape. We all have forces in which we choose to place our faith. It's just that some, such as the law, work better than others.

THE SADIE HARTLEY MURDER DIARIES

THE DOOR OPENED, BATHING SADIE IN WELCOMING LIGHT. CHECKING THE STUN GUN AND KNIFE WERE IN PLACE, SARAH STEPPED FORWARD TO SNUFF OUT KINDNESS ITSELF

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON

August 2015

Wow, I may get to be instrumental in helping remove the awful woman! This may happen. Wow!....



Sadie's daughter has spoken of how she wants her mother to be remembered as the "happy, lovely lady she was"



A lone steeple rises out of Helmshore town. It looks down, silent, at the rows of brick houses nestled against the grey-green Lancashire hills. Pendle, famed for its historic witch trials, is just up the road; Edenfield just down it. In one of those streets with their neat little night lights is a large, well-kept house. It's big and roomy, but it's not vast and posh. It has cream-white walls, soft lighting and old exposed staircases and banisters. There are a couple of pictures on the walls, just enough to make it homey, but sparse enough to show that the occupant, Sadie Hartley, is busy. She's a loving, working mum who's made it her business to provide for her family, after all. A bonny lady with laughter lines, she'd have offered you a brew if you'd have visited. On the evening of Thursday 14 January 2016, Sadie answered the door to a young woman. She was then dragged backwards into her home, electrocuted with a stun gun and stabbed more than 40 times before the murderer stole away to scrub the sticky blood off her hands.

The woman who knocked so politely at the door before stabbing the occupant to death was Sarah Williams. She had been in a brief relationship with Sadie's partner, Ian Johnston, two years prior. Seeing the soon-to-be murderer as "clingy", Ian had left her, and since then had been living with Sadie. The two women couldn't have been more different.

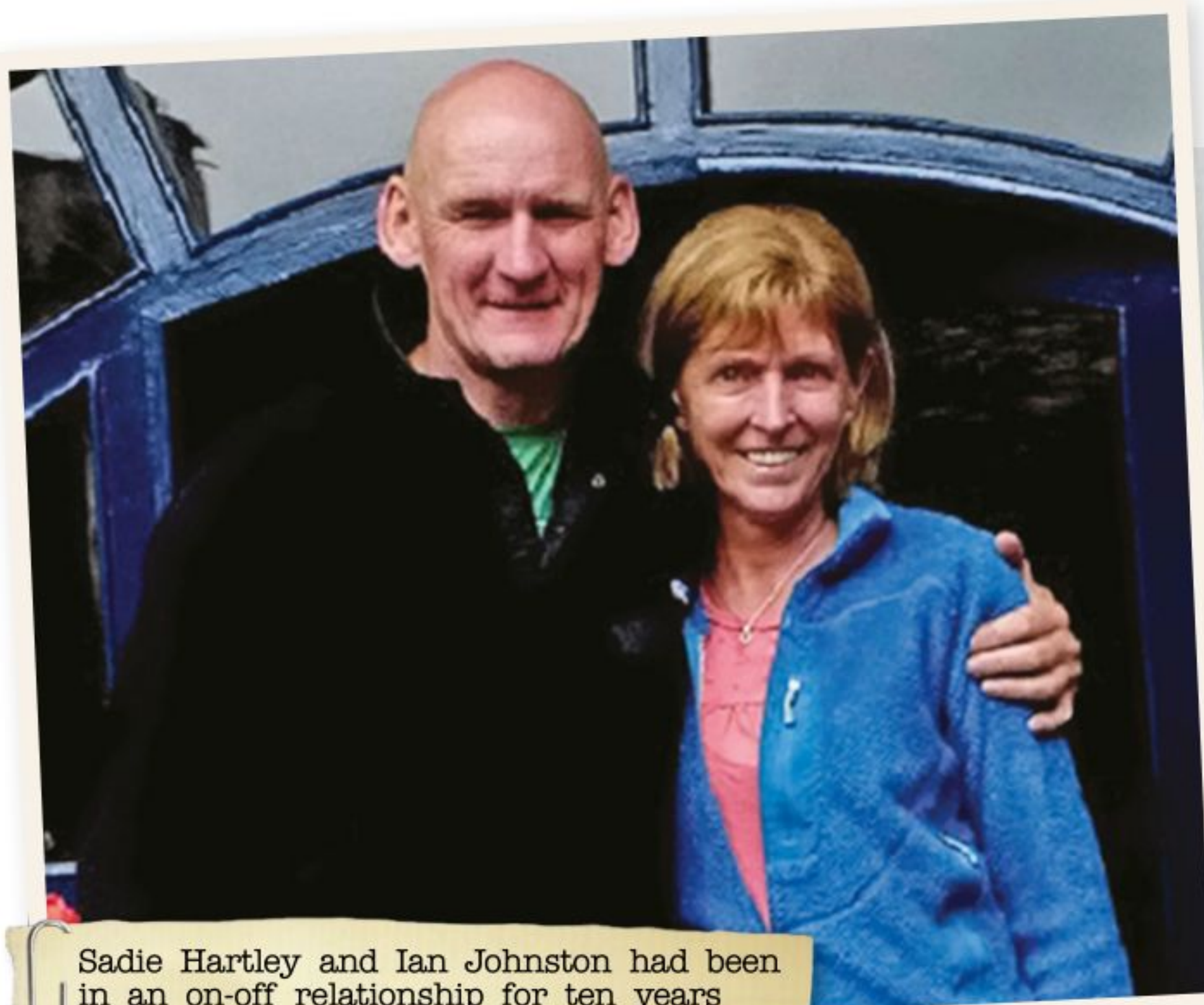
Sadie was on her own that night. Ian, an ex-fireman and rescue worker, was away on a skiing trip. She was going to join him there the next day – they'd worked hard all their lives and loved kicking back on boating trips and holidays.

For Sadie, nothing was out of the question or irresolvable: "She never ever got confrontational. She never got cross. She never got angry. All she ever wanted to do was talk things through," her daughter, Charlotte, said in a documentary made after the murder. If you had a problem, Sadie would sit you down and talk with you about it – no judgement. Ian also spoke of how they had got a five-bedroom house "with enough room for everyone to come and feel comfortable." Sadie was classy but didn't do airs and graces, as happy posing for photos messing about on a pony or dressing up for a bit of fun with belly dancing as she was talking to the people she worked with – they were the ones who raised the alarm out of concern for her. She'd earned their respect as she was a determined, caring character who had studied for an honours degree in science and gone on to work in the medicine industry for 20 years. Then, with a friend, she set up and ran a health care company that specialises in helping doctors and other health professionals share new treatments. Despite being in a tricky economic climate, the company has gone from strength to strength for 16 years as of June 2016. Sadie was, in a nutshell, working with Leukaemia and Lymphoma Research to find a cure for cancer.

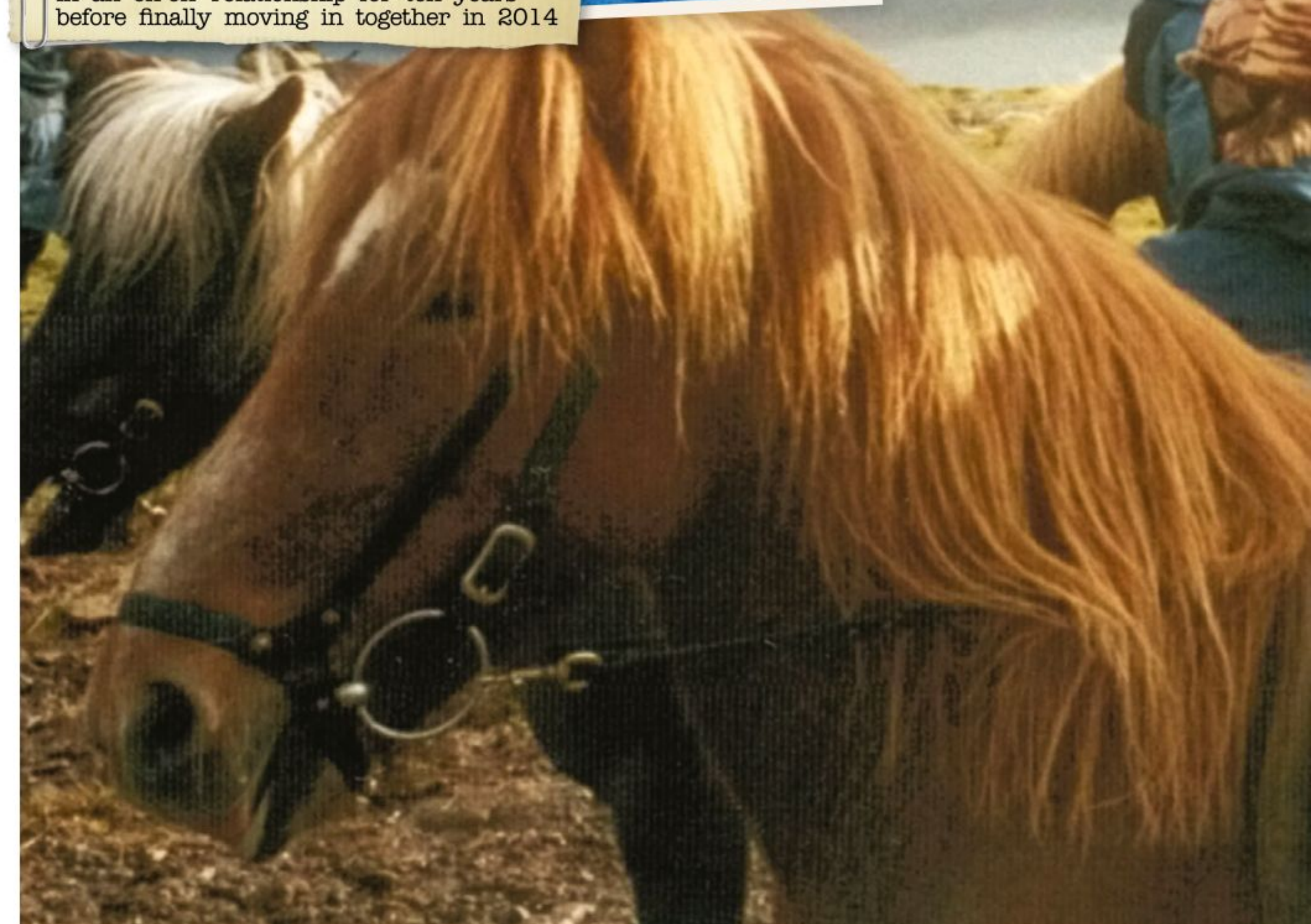
THE AWFUL 'AUTHORS'

Sarah could hardly have been more different. Police searching her house after the murder found the romantic novels she kept. While most read novels for a fantastic flight of fancy or an invigorating stimulation on a world-weary day, Sarah used them to tip herself away from the every day and into a world where high passion and planning murder were plausible. She decided to become the author of her own narrative. Of course, for any fantasy to hold up, it has to have a willing cast and an appreciative audience. As it happened, Sarah found both in Katrina 'Kitt' Walsh.

Sarah had known Kitt since she was 12 years old, when they met at a horse riding stable. Although Kitt was 20 years



Sadie Hartley and Ian Johnston had been in an on-off relationship for ten years before finally moving in together in 2014



“ SARAH AND KITT RESOLVED TO PLAN “THE PERFECT MURDER”, THOUGH LIKE AMATEUR HACKS, THEY MERELY LOST THE PLOT ”

Sarah's senior, they shared their mutual love of *Harry Potter* films and, as time went on, would go on holidays together. That said, the two were unlikely accomplices. Sarah strode Amazonian through their town and, like a teen-magazine heroine, would push her top's shoulder straps awkwardly down while on holiday to show off that extra bit of flesh. Kitt seemed, on paper at least, a complementary match. An intelligent woman with an interest in the arts, an accent that hints at a good deal of selective schooling and educated in animal husbandry to the extent that she was a horse riding instructor, Kitt was nevertheless said to be "in awe" of the younger woman. Reports speak of her as a muffled, shuffling presence behind Sarah, seemingly scarcely daring to breathe in her friend's shadow.

Sarah had met Ian in 2012, but at the time he left her, the narratives both converge and separate. It's almost as though Sarah was reading crossed out, scribbled drafts of her books



Sadie was an adventurer. A keen and capable sportswoman, her joyful smile shows her love of horse riding whether for play or at formal equestrian events

rather than the real thing: according to the court, Kitt was no mere stooge and Sarah was no romantic Wonder Woman.

Just as Sarah had supported Kitt through a divorce, Kitt supported Sarah through her own relationship troubles. When Ian broke off his relationship with Sarah, this supposedly self-assured woman's response was to visit his house, sit outside and send him explicit 'sext' messages. For two years. She even sent Sadie a letter in an attempt to break the bond between the couple, bragging that she herself had had "unbelievably fantastic sex" with Ian. Sarah didn't seem to realise that, unlike herself, Sadie knew that sometimes things happen and you have to move on, knowing what's important to you. Not Sarah. Like with her fascination with romance novels, she was an enthusiast of the *Game Of Thrones* book and film series and consciously modelled herself on the 'Red Woman' character to entice Ian back. Like a magnet, she would attract people to her. She had been with one boyfriend since she was 17. He would visit her early every morning with the full knowledge of his wife, even during the time Sarah was planning the murder of Sadie. At the same time, Sarah shared holidays with Kitt, her supposed friend and, some assumed, lover.

It was about six months after Ian had left Sarah that she began to plot Sadie's assassination in the belief it would bring

SARAH'S MALICIOUS MAILOUT

SARAH WROTE SADIE A LETTER TO PERSUADE HER TO DITCH IAN. EXCERPTS ARE SHOWN BELOW. SARAH ADMITTED IN COURT IT WAS "A CRAP THING TO DO"

Dear Sadie

I think you should know that Ian has been cheating on you for over a year. He's been having an affair with me since returning from Camp Suisse in August 2013.

By his own admission, Ian is not in love with you, never has been and never will be...

We have been sleeping together and everything else that goes with it, week in and week out for some considerable time now. Have a look around the house, there's plenty of my things around the place. Has he even changed the sheets since we were last in there?...

The sex is unbelievably fantastic, the best he's ever had by a really, really long way. We have never been able to get enough of each other. It satisfied a need in him he will never really be able to suppress or manage without.

Ian is stressed out and extremely depressed. His mental state is somewhat of a serious concern to me hence why I'm writing this. I feel you have played a significant part in getting him in the state he's in now, which appears to be worsening by the day...

You booked a holiday to the Galápagos Islands which was way, way out of any budget he could possibly afford. I know that you paid for it but he was massively uncomfortable with it and felt the financial disparity was far too great. He wanted to leave you before going to the Galápagos Islands but felt unable to due to how guilty he felt because of the money you had spent on it. Whilst he unsurprisingly enjoyed the holiday he utilised every opportunity to get in touch with me and was back in bed with me as soon as he walked through his front door.



This police mug shot of Katrina 'Kitt' Walsh gained a lot of press attention when the two were arrested, leading to wild media speculation about the "oddball" pair



Sarah Williams, retaining her trademark quizzical eyebrow in this police mug shot, was as cool as a cucumber under questioning

Ian back to her. She and Kitt resolved to plan “the perfect murder”, though like amateur hacks, they merely lost the plot. With Sarah’s favourite novelists infusing their minds, the women embarked on what Professor David Wilson, a commentator on the case, has said is best described as a ‘folie a deux’ (madness shared by two) – a relationship in which they convinced each other of the validity of what they were about to do by creating an ideological system in which the action was, to them, justified. As a result of this, the women seem to have considered themselves almost as characters, stunningly clever super spies readying to return a gallant knight to his (in their minds) true love. At the same time, Sadie, who they hadn’t actually met and whose only ‘crime’ was to have won Ian’s companionship, was cast as a villain. They tried to tarnish her using insults that focused on her femininity as though she were using it as a weapon – a hypocrisy if ever there was one considering Sarah’s reliance on the ways of *Thrones’s* Red Woman.

THE KEY EVENTS

They set about planning the murder. After ditching downright daft ideas including blaming the assassination on ISIS terrorists, Sarah and Kitt decided to murder Sadie in her own home before vanishing into the night and covering their tracks. The precautions they took sound like episodes from a parody. For instance, on 9 December 2015, they played James Bond: the German excursion. The international women of woe hitched a ferry to Germany, where they bought the Taser that would subdue their foe. Shortly after, on 7 January they made their reckless ‘recce’ – the slapdash twosome were filmed buying flowers on a Tesco’s CCTV recording. Kitt seemingly thought she was being clever by delivering the flowers in the evening to confirm where Sadie lived. Sadie naturally confided in those who cared for her about her concerns over the strange visit. Something was afoot.

The strike happened on 14 January 2016. Assailant Sarah, in a specially bought Renault Clio and clad in darkness, stole down the lane. She knocked on the door. The woman that stepped out was paralysed when she was shot with the barb of a 500,000-volt stun gun that stayed in her body, before Sarah held her arms aloft and stabbed her more than 40 times. The flesh had gouge marks up to 20 centimetres deep where the kitchen knife had been jammed in, with one of the main wounds slicing through the face and coming out through the cheek. The right eye was popped. The spinal column was cut. The liver was burst. The knife almost went clean through to the other side. The body was left laying in a pool of blood in the hallway.

Home Office pathologist Dr Philip Lumb reported that the additional marks to the arms and hands showed that despite being small in stature, completely unarmed and against an unexpected attacker with considerable brute force, Sadie Hartley had defended herself to the last.

Sadie’s attacker didn’t even do her own dirty work. She ran and gave all of the evidence – clothes, weapons, car key – to her stooge for incineration and disposal. Kitt scattered it around the local area. Job done... except she overlooked the small matter of the volumes of detailed diaries she kept – the ones in which she had been chronicling their every deed – and left them where she worked for the police to find.

Kitt’s diaries reveal all. At times, entries jump obviously and disturbingly between fact and fiction. An entry from September 2015 reads: “Sarah turned up. Caught *Hunted* (a reality television programme in which contestants try to



KITT’S DAMNING DIARIES

SARAH’S ACCOMPLICE WROTE AVIDLY ABOUT THE PAIR’S PLOT IN WHAT WOULD BECOME CRUCIAL EVIDENCE

September 2014

Sarah came round so got caught up in endless murder plots for Ian’s other half.

June 2015

We’re also seriously talking of getting rid of her opponent. I agree is probably a good play... she does seem to be a totally evil bitch.

August 2015

Wow, I may get to be instrumental in helping remove the awful woman! This may happen. Wow!... Am unexpectedly excited by it. Was so buzzing so much I needed a Southern Comfort to wind down a bit.

A lot of texts from Sarah, Kev (Kitt’s ex-husband) not going for the idea of being a hitman after all, scuppered that idea. Plan B will be needed.

When my mobile went off, Sarah, So I could say yes to her coming round and we could plot to take the bint out as Kev was a bust on it, I’m going to be involved now, Heaven help me!!

I have no moral qualms, just a serious don’t let us get caught twinge.

September 2015

Sarah's had an idea that would spare me the anxiety as she things [sic] of just riding on a motorcycle, killing and leaving said floosy [sic] and riding off. I just have to clandestinely train Sarah to ride a bike and store said bike.*

Sarah turned up. Caught Hunted (Channel 4 television show). Then discussed plans to off the cunt

December 2015

I said no matter what her way of testing the bitch, then she (Sarah) could do with that zapper or she risks being injured herself.

So will get a trip to Germany out of this. Took ages to wind down, all the excitement of plotting the perfect murder.

* On considering whether to teach Sadie to ride a motorbike in order to run Sadie over and blame the murder on ISIS terrorists

October 2015

Just buzzing too much over the end of Hunted and all the planning after. Sarah has ordered a GPS tracker on my credit card to be delivered here and will give me cash for it. That's fine as I'm not going to be involved at the sharp end.



SARAH'S GAME OF BONES

THE DARK FANTASY SERIES GAME OF THRONES WAS ONE OF SARAH'S INSPIRATIONS FOR MURDER

"The night is dark" and "full of terrors" are the lines from *Game Of Thrones* that Sarah and Kitt took to heart in preparation for the murder. Sarah claimed she was reading the second book in George RR Martin's fantasy drama series *A Song Of Ice And Fire*, on which *Game Of Thrones* is based, on the evening that Sadie Hartley was killed, but the connection runs deeper.

Kitt stated that Sarah idolised the show's character Melisandre – the Red Woman – a priestess who plays on her sexual allure to ingratiate men in order to control them. It has been reported that Kitt and Sarah engaged in a game where Sarah would draw a knife along Kitt's throat, with Kitt 'playing' Sadie being intimidated or killed. At one of these sessions and following Sarah's lead, they intoned the words to each other that Melisandre performs to her followers during a ritual. The duo no doubt felt they were usurping the story's sense of grandeur and cultural importance in the process. Play-acting as Melisandre may also have been Sarah's way of identifying with the determined character in order to prepare for what killing someone would entail both physically and emotionally. Of course, in following a fictitious sorcerer's example, she was wrong.



ABOVE Kitt's battered diaries detailed the pair's plans for the assassination. Kitt left them at her work place where they were found by police

evade fake intelligence officers). Then discussed the plans to off [Sadie].” At other times, such as when Sarah managed to fit a device to Ian’s car in order to track his movements, she is described jubilantly as “bouncing”. But what Kitt seemed most impressed about was that participating in murder would give her an excuse for a little holiday – apparently ignoring all the ways she could have a night or two away without someone losing their life, commenting she’d “get a trip to Germany out of” it.

Her language seems caught between the knowing decisions of an educated adult and that of a mischievous child. Her most damning statement – “I have no moral qualms, just a serious don’t let us get caught twinge” – shows that by mentioning morals, she knew what they were and, therefore, knew right from wrong. In the next paragraph she suggests both that she doesn’t see the crime as a problem as long as they don’t get caught, and conversely that her childish approach to the crime (as some kind of jolly jape) makes the entire matter less serious. After all, she sees her pre-murder nerves as a “twinge” or mild irritation.

THE POLICE PULL TOGETHER

Crime fiction, like that seen in novels, sometimes leads us to root for battle-weary detectives, tipped Trilby and whisky in hand as the evening moves on. But the reality of solving horrendous crimes like this one is people like Bryony Midgley, a detective constable on the police force who made it their mission to catch Sadie’s killers. Bryony listened as a colleague described what had happened to Sadie, then asked her colleagues to take a second to think about the loving mum before going out to get her justice. Bryony is young, with a clean, unfussy style and a calm face. Her voice rises at the exclamation of what happened to Sadie: “horrryble”. Her northern English accent is so unlike Hollywood neo-noir; it’s unguarded and reminiscent of just having your mate around for tea. It reminds you that it isn’t some lofty femme fatale that’s been killed, all jagged power-suit and pursed lips, but someone’s mum. Police found Sarah’s mobile phone number on Sadie’s phone, as Sarah had been sending Sadie abusive messages. The police also knew that Sarah had been contacting Ian, who had been replying to her messages as recently as ten days before the murder.

Between the comradely banter over breakthroughs that they used to keep their spirits up for Sadie, these officers of the law sacrificed their family time to interview the two suspects in their charge. But they knew they would see their family members again. Sarah “doesn’t seem too fazed,” Bryony commented, considering she’s never been arrested before and is ‘up’ for murder. Sarah seemed more concerned about her dog than what she’d done... before she refused to answer further questions, that is.

Kitt was another story. One second she claimed to have problems with her memory, saying it lasted no more than three days; at other times she repeated, “I might have done something, I might have done something, I might have done something. I just don’t remember,” before giving the police all the details they required. In the interview room, she reeled off details, appearing only too eager to please. Her bulging eyes and thrashing hand supposedly showed her demonstrating the “squeeze, squeeze” stun gun that Sarah ‘forced’ her to buy, Kitt’s curling tongue recapturing the “crackly, crackly” sound she said it made. It was as though the horror of that night was a war movie she’d watched rather than the world of hurt she was in. Regardless of all

the drama, the police handled it. Blurry CCTV showed her woollen-hatted figure on the station corridor floor, knees huddled and rocking as an officer calmed her down. Just as Sarah was in a constellation of relationships, Kitt was a jigsaw of her own character. Both, in the end, blamed each other.

The jury heard of the chaotic subplots in the story. Secret support assassin Kitt bought the knife of fate using her Tesco Clubcard (because ‘every little helps’) and the stun gun from the German jaunt was a steal – part of a deal with some pepper spray included. She’d bought the car tracker (using her credit card) on the understanding that Sarah would pay her back. Sarah set up her alibi when her boyfriend, David, saw her at home in bed with flu earlier in the evening. The two even saved on expensive cleaning products by leaving the car they had got especially for the evening (at the bargain price of £430) in a car park miles away. As a final precaution, a little bit of dark sticky tape had carefully been applied over the ‘3’ on the car’s number plate to make it look like an ‘8’.

Somewhat unsurprisingly, the jury at Preston Crown Court found both women guilty. Judge Mr Justice Turner sentenced Sarah to a minimum of 30 years in prison, while Kitt was sentenced to a minimum of 25.

THE FACE OF A MURDERER

Like idle gossip that might make its way between neighbours over a garden gate, a lot of press attention focused on the looks of these two accomplices. Sarah was cast as the wanton woman, based on her selfies with the *I’m A Celebrity*-style jungle hat and an eyebrow cocked at a jaunty angle.

Kitt’s mug shot also gained a lot of attention in the tabloids. In it, her face is make-up free and her head is bald, save wisps of hair that stick out from one side of her head – a result of the alopecia Kitt suffers from, which makes her hair fall out. She appears boggle-eyed from questioning, and she looks less than stereotypically feminine, not the norm – it is the kind of mug shot that raises suspicions from the media before any facts have the chance to be presented. Acquaintances were quoted as commenting that she was “butch”, had tattoos, had had her fortune read (and not just in the morning newspaper) and, a final nail in the coffin, liked art. It seemed everyone had made their mind up about the duo’s guilt when commentators described the murder as what happens when “two oddballs” – her and Sarah – come together. But these are not the things that made Kitt and Sarah criminals. What made them criminals were their choices, and those choices saw Sadie Hartley lose her life.

Sarah stole Sadie’s life as a result of envy – she couldn’t stand the idea that someone else had something that she wanted. She was determined to get it all – the two lovers, the adoring best friend, the glamorous-sounding job at a ski slope – the whole movie package.

Sadie Hartley, sportswoman, businesswoman, adventurer, mother and friend is no longer with us. Charlotte, her daughter, has spoken about her mother’s thoughtfulness, sense of fun and strong family values. Charlotte has inherited her mother’s features as well as her determination to do the right thing by those she cares for, and for that Sadie would have been proud.

“ MARKS TO THE ARMS AND HANDS SHOWED THAT SADIE HARTLEY HAD DEFENDED HERSELF TO THE LAST ”



ABOVE Police brave the freezing January weather in Helmsore to search the local area for clues to catch the victim’s killer

RIGHT TOP Kitt ‘disposed’ of the German-bought, 500,000 volt stun gun used to subdue their victim by burying it under manure at the stables where she worked

RIGHT BOTTOM The keys to the Renault Clio bought as the getaway car for the crime were found under horse manure at Kitt’s place of work



Despite being scrubbed with bleach, Sadie's blood was found in three places on Sarah's bath and linked her to the crime

FOILING A 'FOLIE A DEUX'

WHAT IS A FOLIE A DEUX?

Folie a deux was once a distinct, rare, recognised mental disorder/condition. It was first described in 1877. In the original description, which was a social not a psychiatric one, one person generates the delusion and imposes it on another; the other becomes resistant but gradually succumbs and the delusion has a degree of plausibility. Both are very close (usually a parent-offspring or sibling-sibling relationship) and one is usually the dominant, driving agent and the other is submissive. About 90 per cent of cases are family members and the average age is 46-53. It has been removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (version five), which is an indicator of its validity as a diagnosis and a condition – there is little evidence for it.

BIO



PROFESSOR G NEIL MARTIN

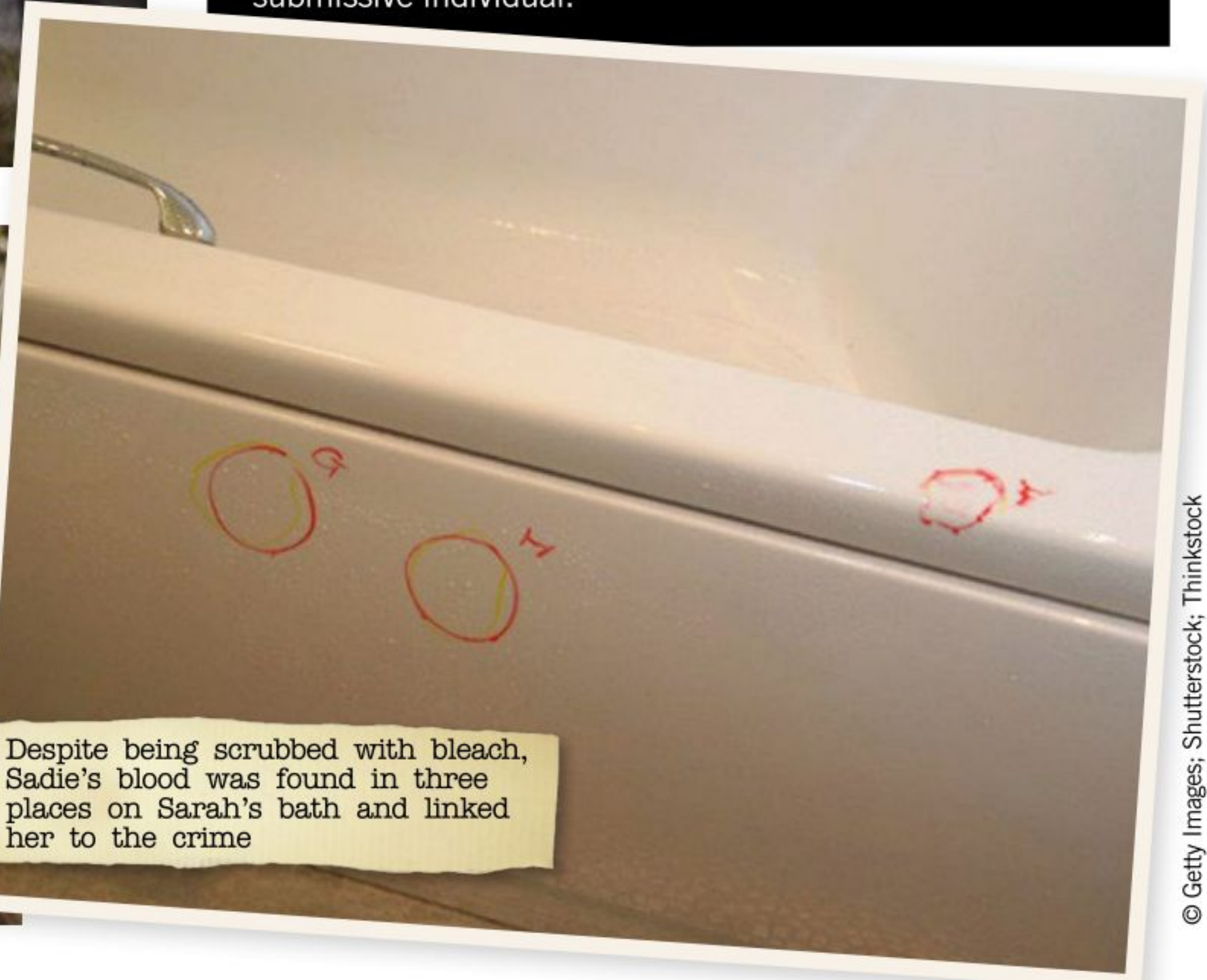
Professor G Neil Martin is the author of more than 13 books on psychology, including the bestselling textbook *Psychology*, and *Human Neuropsychology*. He is the head of psychology at Regent's University London, where he lectures on the neuropsychology of crime.

WHAT CAUSES IT TO DEVELOP?

Almost all reported cases are co-morbid, that is, they occur in the context of other mental illnesses – such as schizophrenia, delusions, depression with delusions etc. Some research suggests that dysfunctional interpersonal relationships are a risk factor.

CAN A FOLIE A DEUX BE RESOLVED?

Antidepressant and antipsychotic medication and physical separation have been used [as treatment] and these seem to be effective. Psychotherapy has been used largely for the submissive individual.





Calling her actions “shrewd and despicable,” prosecutors alleged that Kakehi had planned the murders of her husbands well in advance



JAPAN'S 'BLACK WIDOW' KILLER

COLD, CALCULATED, CUNNING: JAPAN'S DEADLIEST WOMAN HUNTED
FOR FRAIL ELDERLY MEN WHO WOULD LEAVE HER THE RICH
BENEFACTOR OF THEIR WILL IN A LANDMARK JAPANESE SERIAL SLAYING

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

After an intense three year wait, the first day of the trial for Japan's most prolific female killer had finally arrived. The media, which had dubbed the defendant the 'Black Widow of Kyoto', had speculated that her victims had been as many as 14. Each one had been – according to the prosecution – poisoned by this femme fatale who had coerced her wealthy and elderly victims into loving

her. Playing the doting wife or fiancée who promised them she would be with them forever, only for multiple male companions to die suddenly and inexplicably. As the defendant took a seat, all eyes settled on the most dangerous woman in the country. Some in the gallery must have scrutinised the investigators' instincts and as they witnessed the accused take her seat inside the Kyoto District Court: a 71

year old senior citizen named Chisako Kakehi. The so-called 'black widow' had plead not guilty to three charges of murder and one of attempted murder. Could a seemingly frail and confused elderly woman be Japan's deadliest killer, the public wondered.

SETTING HER SIGHTS ON DESTINY

Born Chisako Yamamoto on 28 November 1946, Kakehi grew up a member of a middle class family in Kitakyushu city, Fukuoka. A smart girl who stood out from her classmates academically, Kakehi had strong ambitions for a woman growing up in Japan in the 1950s following the Second World War. The war had left many of Japan's relationships with other nations strained, yet during this difficult time for her homeland, Kakehi dreamed of attending university. However, it was a dream that was dashed by her traditionalist and domineering father, a steel factory worker who believed a woman's place was in the home. Despite his daughter's ambitions to better herself in the post-war world, he deemed it improper for her to want to achieve a higher education and instead wanted to see her married and comfortable as a mother and homemaker.

Between 1965 and 1969 Kakehi worked as a bank clerk, leaving her job after she married her first husband at the age of 24. The man Kakehi had promised to spend the rest of her life with was a former Osaka-based truck driver who made a fortune during an entrepreneurial move to build up a fabric printing company. It was at around this time that his wife was introduced to cyanide, an important ingredient in the commercial fabric printing world. The pair had two children and were considered to be a happily married couple with a thriving business in the Osaka Prefecture.

In what appeared to be a tragic and freak incident in 1994, Kakehi lost her first husband to an unexplained illness. His death came the very night he was deemed fit for release from



The trial of the infamous 'Black Widow' dominated the attention of the public. More than 540 residents queued to witness the outcome

“ IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A TRAGIC AND FREAK INCIDENT IN 1994, KAKEHI LOST HER FIRST HUSBAND TO AN UNEXPLAINED ILLNESS ”

HER CUNNING PLAN

THE TRUE TALLY OF THE DAMAGE DONE BY JAPAN'S BLACK WIDOW OVER A SPAN OF DECADES SHOWS HOW CALCULATED SHE HAD BEEN

14

Male suitors that have been linked to Kakehi

135

Days the murder trial ran for before it was concluded with a guilty verdict

One Billion (YEN)

The amount of money Kakehi received from insurance payouts after her lovers died

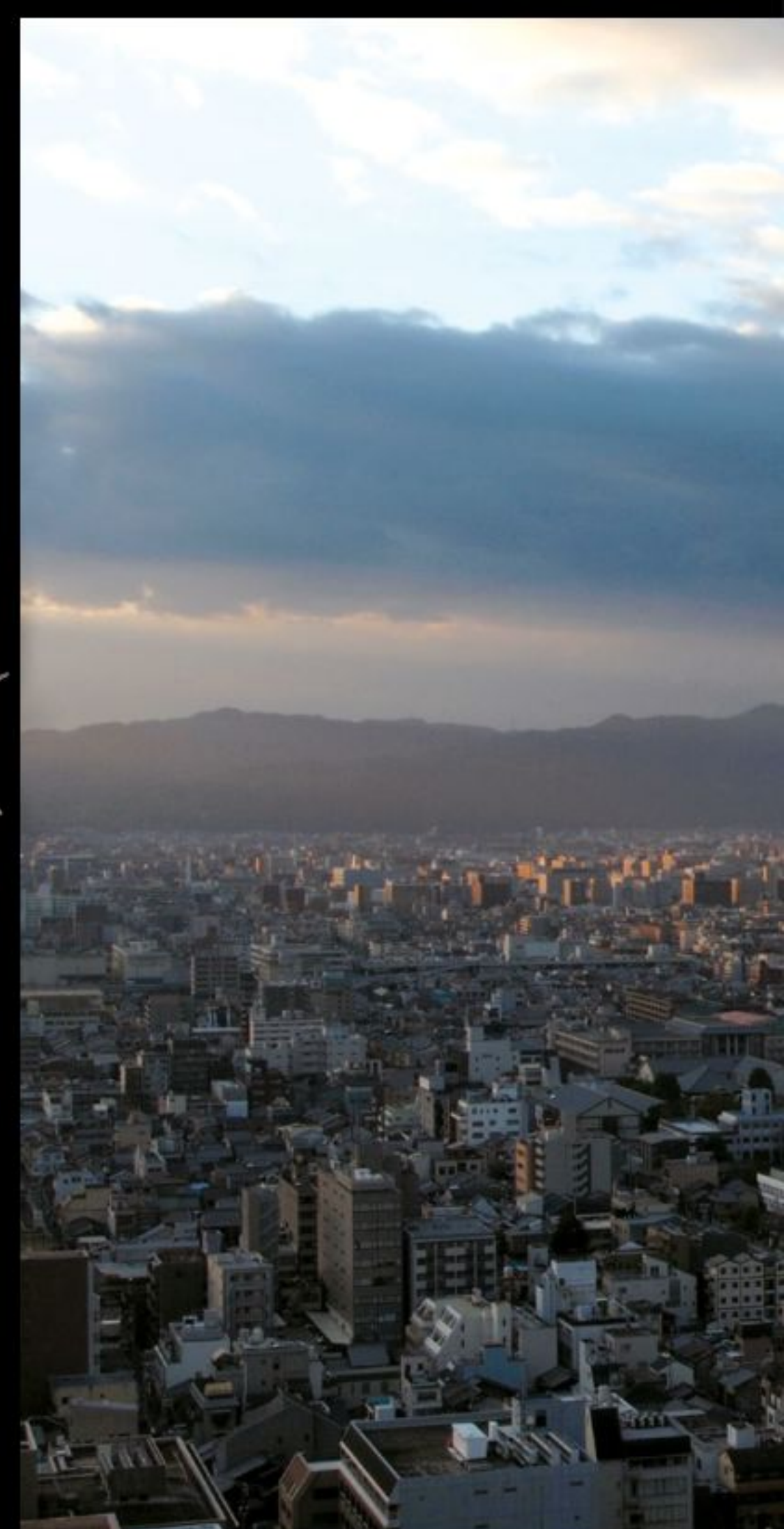
203

The total number of years Kakehi is believed to have operated as a killer

1

Man survived

Marriages that ended in the sudden death of Kakehi's husband

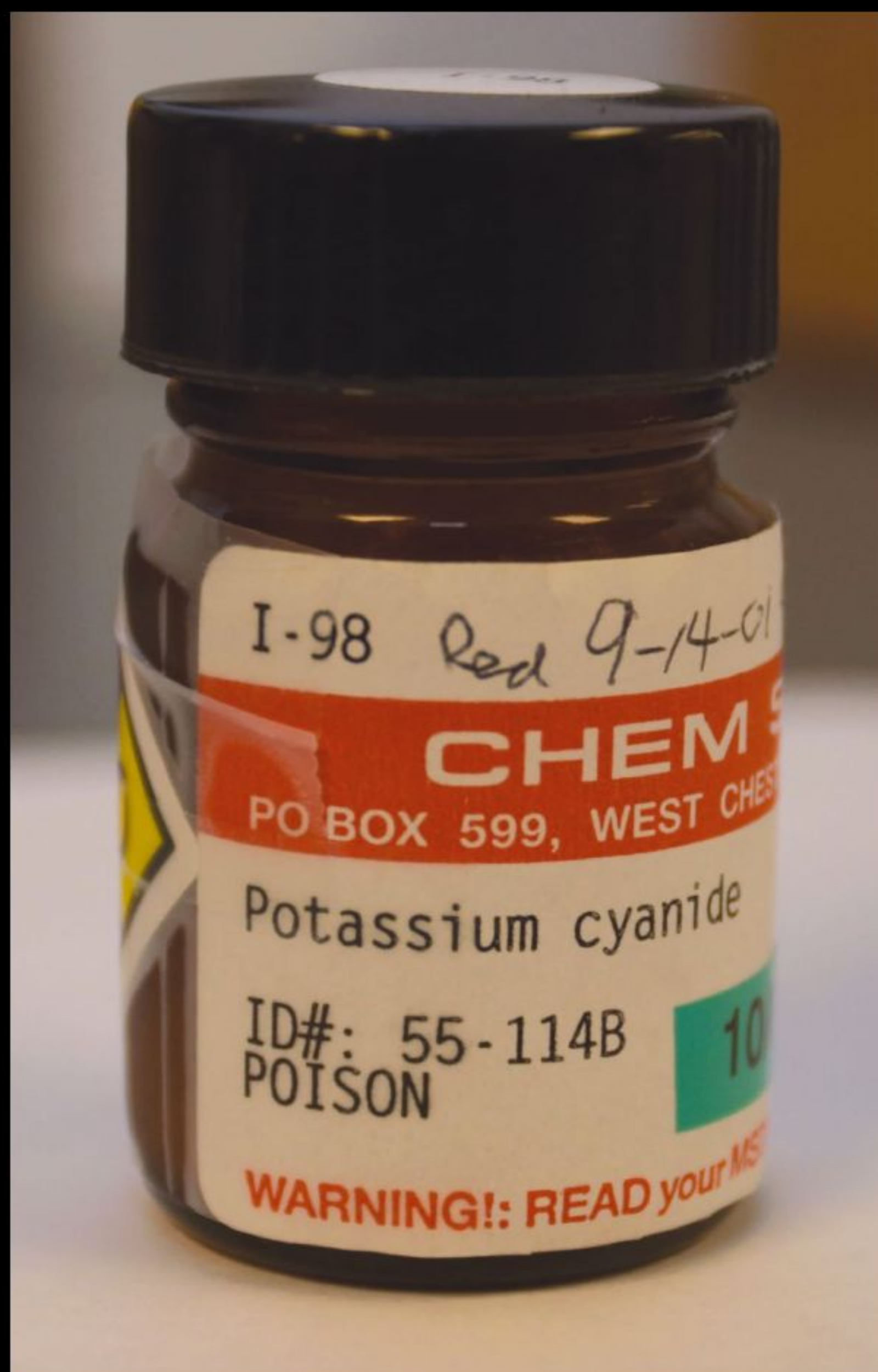




ABOVE The city of Kyoto would have provided Kakehi with a multitude of victims



BELOW Cyanide is highly toxic. Would Kakehi have had access to the chemical through her first husband's business?



hospital following a heart attack. He was 54, a fairly young age in a society that boasts beating the average lifespan of multiple other countries. Kakehi tried to keep the business that had afforded her a luxurious lifestyle for the best part of almost three decades afloat, but in 2003 it closed down, leaving Kakehi to auction her house off and ask neighbours for loans.

A WEB OF LIES

Poor, alone and desperate Kakehi found a new spouse to take her first husband's place in 2004, a Gunma Prefecture native in his late 1960s and manager of a pharmaceutical wholesaler. Within two years of marriage he too passed away at the age of 69. The cause of his death was considered to be a stroke. Again, no foul play was suspected and the grieving widow moved on to her next husband. Less than two years later in February 2008, she was once again a blushing bride having married husband number three, 75 year old Toshiaki Yamamoto, who ran an agricultural cooperative. This time it took only three months for the fit and healthy man to drop dead of a suspected heart attack.

In 2007 she had become engaged to Toshiaki Suehiro, a resident from Kobe. That same year the former Japan prefectural official collapsed in the middle of the street. He was put on life support but survived his unexplainable illness until 2009, when he died of cancer. Blood samples from Kakehi's most recent deceased husband showed traces of cyanide, something that was not ruled immediately suspicious. Regardless of at least three marriages ending in death, Kakehi was still searching for her next husband.

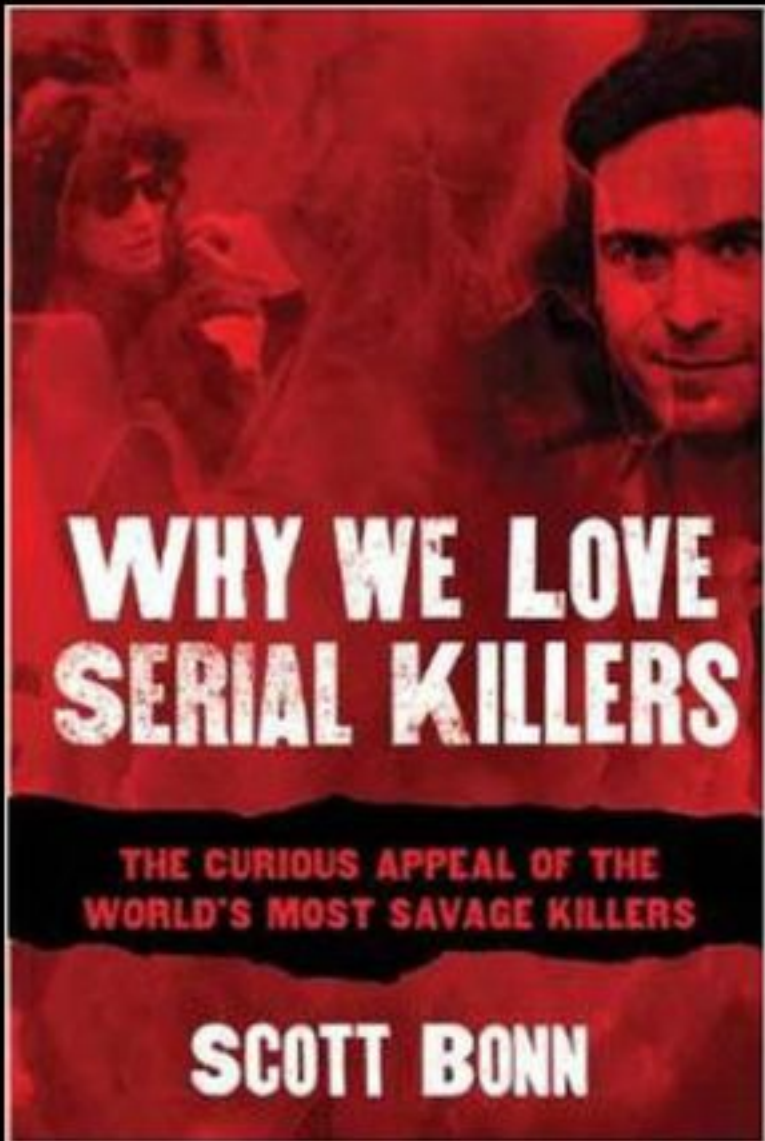
THE POISONED CHALICE

KAKEHI WAITED PATIENTLY FOR HER PREY TO DIE, SLOWLY LACING THEIR DRINKS WITH POISON. BUT WHAT EFFECT WOULD IT HAVE HAD ON THEIR BODIES?

Commonly referred to as 'cyanide', the poison ingested by Kakehi's victims is a chemical containing a carbon nitrogen bond. While there are many places that cyanide can be found, from cigarettes to apple seeds and apricot pips, as well as burning coal, exposure to cyanide is not always instantaneously deadly. Scientists estimate that it can take only around half a gram of cyanide to kill a fully grown adult. Kakehi fed her victims poison in health drinks and capsules. The effects of such a strong chemical on the body were deadly following ingestion, which is the most dangerous kind of exposure to cyanide. In the humans, cyanide prevents the human body from fusing oxygen to make energy molecules, the tissues in the body that require energy for day to day function such as the heart. Nerve cells and muscle quickly use up all their energy and begin to die off, and once a certain amount of those die off, the vitality of the human body rapidly decreases, eventually leading to death.

©Getty, Alamy

BELOW Dr Scott Bonn investigates why we have such a strong fascination with serial killers



By September 2011, 71 year old Masanori Honda and Kakehi were engaged to be married. Six months later he came off his motorcycle. At the hospital he was pronounced dead having suffered a severe bout of arrhythmia (abnormal heart rate.) Two years after her engagement to Honda, Kakehi was planning her next wedding to Minoru Hioki, a 75 year old retired architect, when one evening his health plummeted. His death was ruled to have been a result of an undiagnosed lung cancer.

Once again, this time within weeks of her lover's death, Kakehi married 75 year old Isao Kakehi. By the end of December 2013 he was found dead in his home. The pair had only been married a month and it was only natural that suspicions would start to arise about the woman whose husbands had all perished after marrying her. Up until this point nothing could be proved. After their deaths their loving and doting wife had their bodies cremated and no autopsy had been performed on the bodies. When investigators began to look into Kakehi they obtained a sample of her latest husband's blood, kept by the hospital following his death. As

BLACK WIDOW

WHERE DID THE TERM 'BLACK WIDOW' COME FROM AND WHY DOES IT INTRIGUE US SO MUCH?

Is the term 'black widow' an FBI classification for serial killers?

'Black Widow' is a popular term. It's not an official term or a scientific term, it's a term the public use and it's based on the fact that the female Black Widow spiders eat their male partners. The FBI categorises serial killers and Kakehi is what is known as a comfort/gain killer. The majority of female serial killers kill for some sort of need – a financial or emotional gain of some sorts. Kakehi was killing because she wanted her husbands' and lovers' money, so that was her motivation and why she killed. Female serial killers are very different from male serial killers; they kill for different reasons and typically use different methods. Female serial killers are more likely to be poisoners. In fact, that's the number one modus operandi/ method used by female serial killers and Kakehi used cyanide so that's very consistent.

What other characteristics make up the archetypal 'black widow' or comfort/gain killer?

This type of serial killer is going to blend into society. They're going to be very patient and meticulous, because if you're going to poison somebody you typically have to do it slowly over time. This type of serial killer is not going to stand out as any sort of homicidal lunatic; they're going to seem pretty normal and quite average. And these kinds of serial killers tend to get away with their crimes for a very long time because they are meticulous and don't leave a lot of clues. They tend to be very intelligent and resourceful, and female serial killers don't kill out of rage. They're not messy; they don't stab and shoot.

What makes this category of serial killer so fascinating to so many?

It's the most common category of female serial killers. There are female serial killers who kill for other reasons. There are mission killers and nurses killing the elderly to put them out of their misery, but this I think is just more enticing. And it has to do with the image of the Black Widow spider that kills its mate – and that's such a dramatic and enticing story for the public to consume.

BIO

DR SCOTT BONN

CRIMINOLOGIST AND AUTHOR

Las Vegas based criminologist Dr Scott Bonn, author of *Why We Love Serial Killers: The Curious Appeal of the World's Most Savage Murderers* is a renowned specialist in examining criminal motivation and behaviour.



it had done with husband number four, it tested positive for traces of cyanide.

MATCHMAKER MAKE ME A MATCH

When police interviewed Kakehi over the death of her husband she appeared inconsolable, sobbing with grief. But one sharp investigator was not so convinced and felt she was responsible. Despite the suspicious blood sample, police had so many questions they still wanted answering: how was Kakehi meeting these men so soon after the deaths of her recent partners? What possible motive could she have for killing them? How was she poisoning them without them noticing? Were they really dealing with a rare femme fatale case in the quiet country where murder and crime were at an all time low (compared to western countries like England and the United States)?

Upon further investigation, police discovered that Kakehi was using dating agencies, as many as ten at one point, to strike up conversations and relationships with lonely old men. She insisted that her future suitors must be rich. Kakehi also specified that her intended match should be elderly, childless and – most suspicious of all – she welcomed a lover suffering from illness. She had honed in on an age group who were single during the later stages of their lives and looking for company. “I will stay with you for the rest of my life”, she told her latest husband during an email sent just a short while before his death.

With seven to 14 male victims linked to Kakehi, the Japanese media dubbed her the ‘Black Widow of Kyoto’, drawing parallels from a deadly spider species where the female kills its mate after it copulates and is satisfied, making her lover her prey in an instant. It was a media storm as the



ABOVE Kakehi's trial went down here, in Kyoto's District Court

press speculated over every detail of her past love life. One man, who had met the defendant through a matchmaking service, later said he had been dating Kakehi in 2011 when she was 62. He was 15 years her senior. Despite the charges against her he described Kakehi as a “good woman” to the court. “My wife died, and living alone was tough, so I wanted to live together (with Kakehi),” the widower said. “When I said that I have a gammy knee, she immediately told me about some stretches that I could do. I thought that she was a very clever lady.”

A trusting singleton who had lost his wife in the late 90s, he was so desperate for company he gave Kakehi his house key after only their fourth meeting. After only a brief period of dating, Kakehi showed a great interest in the affluent widower's assets and investments. She even went as far as to offer to handle and organise his affairs for him. Feeling that Kakehi was too familiar with his elderly wealthy father, the almost victim's son aired his suspicions. Kakehi took offence at the suggestion that she was a gold-digger, and stormed off. Had she been worried that she would be immediately blamed had something happened to her new lover and decided to abort her mission? Had she then moved onto her next prey? Police believed so, and in November 2014 announced that the ‘Black Widow’ was being indicted for murder.

“I KILLED MY HUSBAND”

Beginning on 26 June 2017, the trial of the Japan's ‘Black

“AFTER ONLY A BRIEF PERIOD OF DATING, KAKEHI SHOWED A GREAT INTEREST IN THE AFFLUENT WIDOWER'S ASSETS”

Widow’ was highly anticipated, with hundreds of residents lining up outside the courtroom to listen in on proceedings. Prosecutors were damning in their evidence against Kakehi, calling the charges against her a “heinous crime driven by greed for money.” They argued that Kakehi had collected one billion yen (more than £6.5 million) in payouts over the last ten years. They highlighted a pattern that showed Kakehi being made a benefactor of her husband or lover's assets and how she had squandered her millions away on unsuccessful financial tradings following their untimely deaths.

The prosecution team alleged that Kakehi had been slipping cyanide to her husbands and lovers mostly in liquid form. The poisoned chalice handed to her lovers was disguised as a “health cocktail” for her sick and aging companions, although allegedly she would sometimes hide the poison in “health capsules”. She allegedly had it set up so that following their deaths, Kakehi would be set to receive a substantial payout from life insurance policies. Kakehi's defence team did everything possible to plant reasonable doubt in the minds of jurors, drawing upon her 2016 diagnosis of dementia.

A little more than a fortnight since her prolific trial began, Kakehi took the stand in her own trial after insisting she would remain silent throughout. In a dramatic and cinematic turn of events, the elderly woman confessed in an open court to the murder of her fourth husband. “I killed my husband. I have no intention of hiding the guilt. I will laugh it off and die if I am sentenced to death tomorrow,” she said, adding that she had “wanted to kill him out of deep hatred.” Kakehi told the court how her stingy husband had given money to his former wives but never to her, prompting her murderous rage. Asked how she felt about the man she killed, Kakehi said, “50 per cent sorry, and 50 per cent angry.”

Audible gasps erupted in the courtroom. The confession was a shocking revelation from a seemingly harmless senior citizen. Two days later Kakehi claimed she could not remember making such a confession. Her defence attorneys argued that Kakehi was suffering from dementia and therefore could not be held accountable for her actions on the ground of diminished responsibility.

On 7 November 2017, after her arduous 135 day trial, the Kyoto District Court Judge Ayako Nakagawa, who presided over the high profile case, announced the court's decision. “The cases were well prepared in advance,” Nakagawa said of Kakehi's killings adding, “The accused made the victims drink a cyanide compound with a murderous intention in all the four cases.” Of her plots to kill her husband, Nakagawa said: “They were cunning and malicious.” With the swoop of his gavel, the judge announced that Kakehi had been found guilty of three murders and one attempted murder. In a country where murder carries the harshest of punishments, she was sentenced to death by hanging. As her death sentence was announced to the court, Kakehi sat emotionless.

The judge rejected the defence's arguments that the 71 year old before him could not be held criminally liable for her actions, citing emails from 2013 he said proved she was in a capable state of mind at the time of the killings. Yet, her team of lawyers have appealed her “unjust” conviction, arguing that the prosecution failed to prove how their client obtained or stored the deadly poison responsible for killing her husbands – although some speculation reported that it was stored in a plant pot that she disposed of just before her arrest. For now, Kakehi sits in prison awaiting her fate, still bearing the name the media bestowed upon her for those ruthless killings.

MOTHER OF LIES

FIRST SHE BLAMED A “BLACK MAN”, THEN SHE SAID IT WAS HER UNSTABLE MIND: WAS SUSAN SMITH JUST MANIPULATING THE MURDER OF HER OWN CHILDREN FOR ATTENTION?

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

For nine days in October 1994, the heartbreaking story of two innocent children being snatched by a gun-wielding carjacker at a sleepy crossroads in South Carolina in the USA tormented the country. Appearing on national television, their mother wept for them, pleading between breathless sobs for their safe return.

Although on camera she appeared a demure yet traumatised woman, suspicion quickly arose regarding the sincerity of her actions, and the public's sympathy quickly turned to contempt when she admitted she had done the unimaginable and murdered her own children. Their bodies, she told investigators, lay at the bottom of a local lake. By blaming the abduction on a “black man”, her story also roused racial tension in the small rural town.

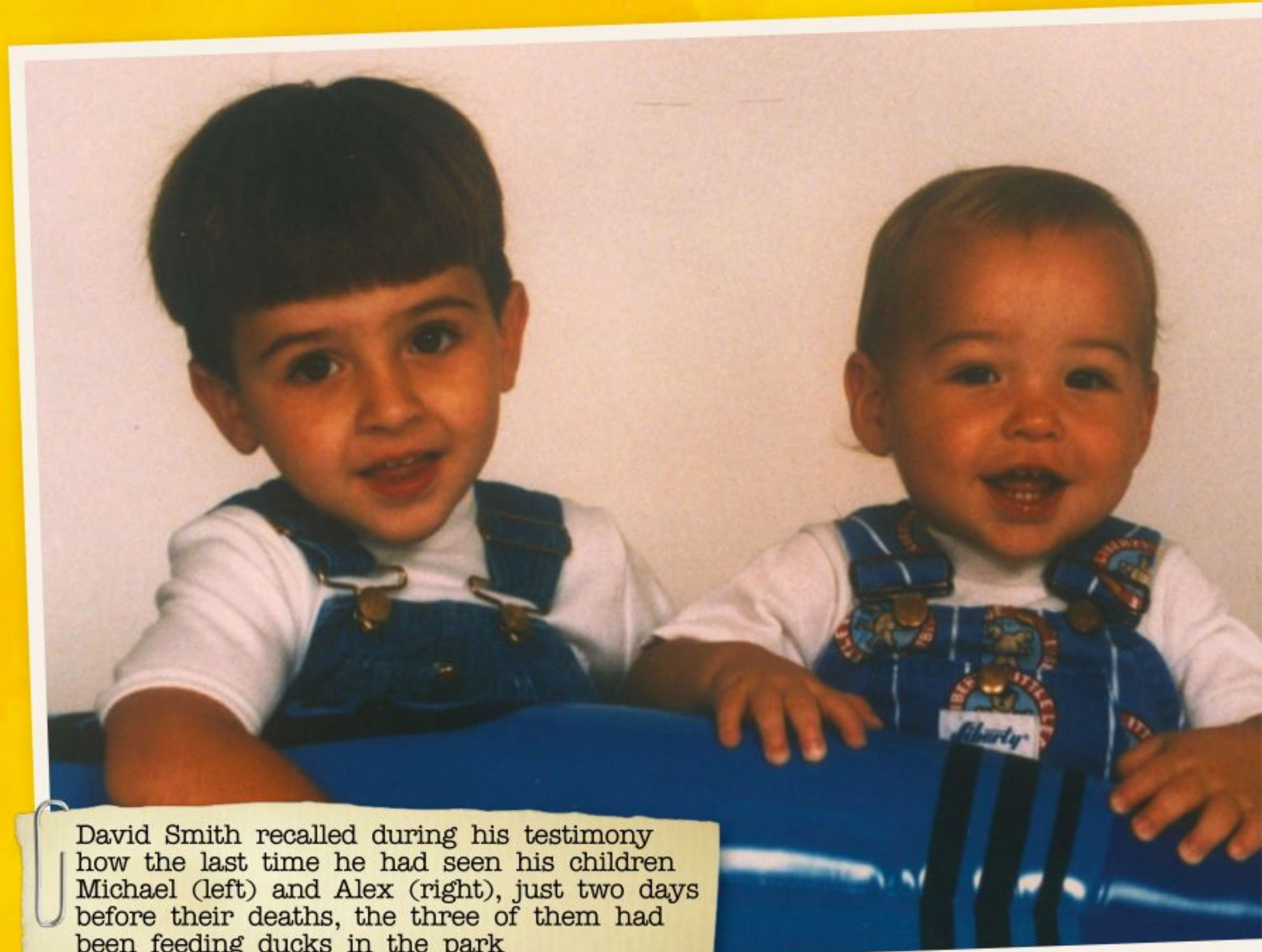
Nobody can fully understand why she committed such a horrific act – she claims that she was “not in her right mind”, and blamed the unthinkable deed on her unfortunate life. Handed a sentence of 30 years to life, Susan Smith sits in prison, still desperate for attention and affection from the nation she tricked into believing she was a victim, when in fact, all along, she was a murderer and a conceited liar.

DADDY ISSUES

Smith's early years were traumatic and difficult for a child to contemplate. When she was only six years old, her father committed suicide. This happened just weeks after he and Smith's mother divorced. In a short space of time, Smith's mother quickly found solace in the arms of Beverley Russell, a successful local businessman, who she married in 1979. The family moved in to his lavish home in an exclusive area in the town. As she reached adolescence, Smith came to look upon

her father's death as a personal rejection, telling a teacher, “I feel deserted. I feel my daddy just couldn't have possibly loved me or he wouldn't have killed himself.”

Despite a second chance at happiness, Smith struggled with life and attempted suicide at the age of 13. More devastation followed when Smith was 15 years old and her stepfather began to molest her. According to the book *Susan Smith: Victim Or Murderer* by George Rekers, one evening Smith climbed on to Russell's lap, in the same way that a child might desperately cling to a parent. Nestling into his shoulder she fell asleep, only to be awoken by Russell's hand



David Smith recalled during his testimony how the last time he had seen his children Michael (left) and Alex (right), just two days before their deaths, the three of them had been feeding ducks in the park

Investigators noticed how, when Smith cried for her children, her face remained dry as she let out her wailing sobs, which further fuelled their growing concerns



wandering from her collarbone to her breast. He then slid her hand on to his lap. All the while Smith pretended she was asleep. The reason she did not jump up and protest to the sexual abuse, Smith told her mother, is that she wanted to “see how far he would go.” When Smith’s mother confronted her husband about the allegations, he did not deny what he had done.

Smith reported her stepfather’s actions to the Department of Social Services, which, along with the local county sheriff’s office, investigated her claims. The family were enrolled in counselling and although Russell at first moved out, within a few sessions of therapy he was back in the family home. Smith’s mother was more concerned that her daughter had attempted to make a public spectacle of the family with her reports than she was for her daughter’s welfare. During her senior year at high school in February 1988, Smith sought help from a counsellor. The abuse at home had continued since Russell moved back in. But she did not press charges and her stepfather faced no consequences for his actions. According to local newspaper the *Charlotte Observer*, in 1989 Smith told a psychiatrist the abuse was a fully fledged “affair”, born out of jealousy that her mother received the majority of her stepfather’s attention.

As a young woman, Smith had a number of partners – one a 40-year-old married man who broke off their relationship. Her reaction to the rejection was to swallow a large dose of Tylenol and aspirin. In hospital, doctors diagnosed her with ‘adjustment disorder’ otherwise recognised as an inappropriate reaction to stress. Despite her troubles, she was an accomplished student, a member of the National Honours Society and voted the “friendliest” classmate during her final years at school. What Smith craved more than anything was love and attention, and she found that (for a while) in her boyfriend and soon-to-be first husband, David Smith.

A NICE GIRL

David, although a pleasant and hard-working man, had his own demons. He was brought up in a deeply religious home and suffered from social isolation as a child. While other kids played in large groups, David would only be allowed to socialise with children approved of by his parents. He and Smith found comfort in one another, however, their remedy of a relationship soon turned toxic.

When Smith discovered she was pregnant at the age of 20, approximately a year after the pair began dating, she and David decided to marry. 11 days before they said their vows, David’s brother died from a critical illness and his father attempted suicide. What should have been a happy honeymoon period in their marriage was spent consoling one another. Their first son, Michael, was born in October 1991, but beneath the veneer of a happy marriage their relationship was rocky and turbulent. There were rumours of infidelity; many sources claimed that it was David’s new wife who was the first to be unfaithful, with David retaliating

“ SMITH STRAPPED HER CHILDREN INTO HER MAZDA PROTEGE AND DROVE AROUND LOOKING FOR THE ANSWERS TO ALL OF HER PROBLEMS ”

in a tryst of his own. During their penultimate separation, Smith discovered she was pregnant and once again the pair reconciled. Alex was born in August 1993. At around this time, Smith began working as a secretary at Conso Products Company textile manufacturer, where she struck up an affair with her boss, Tom Findlay, in 1994. This was put on ice over the Easter holiday when David discovered the affair, but by September they were seeing each other again after Smith told David she wanted a divorce.

After she and David split for the final time, Smith continued her relationship with Findlay, whose father Cary headed the company where they worked. Although she was a single mother, Smith and Findlay appeared to be co-parenting the children effectively and without much trouble. However, their relationship soon came to an end when Findlay wrote her a two-page letter on 25 October, telling her that he didn’t want children, nor did he want to play stepfather, or be with a woman who had children of her own. He also scorned Smith for her promiscuity and “boy-crazy tendencies”, having seen evidence of it himself when he witnessed her kissing and fondling a friend’s husband at a pool party. In his final farewell, he wrote: “If you want to catch a nice guy like me one day, you have to act like a nice girl. And you know, nice girls don’t sleep with married men.”

Taken back by the letter, Smith confronted Findlay. She revealed the abuse she had suffered at the hands of her stepfather, but when that didn’t evoke the reaction she had hoped for, Smith told him she had also slept with his father. Disgusted, Findlay told her that he had no interest in being with her. At 3.30pm, Smith left Conso to pick up three-year-old Michael and

RIGHT Yellow ribbons that once hung in the hope that Michael and Alex would return safely were replaced by blue ones symbolising remembrance of the two little boys found drowned in their mother’s car



For almost two weeks the doting parents appeared on local and national news to appeal for help finding their children



“I WAS AN ABSOLUTE MENTAL CASE!”

IN HER OWN (WRITTEN) WORDS, SMITH ADMITTED TO KILLING HER CHILDREN AT HER “LOWEST POINT”



When I left my home on Tuesday, Oct. 25, I was very emotionally distraught. I didn't want to live anymore! I felt like things could never get any worse. When I left home, I was going to ride around a little while and then go to my mom's.

As I rode and rode and rode, I felt even more anxiety coming upon me about not wanting to live. I felt I couldn't be a good mom anymore, but I didn't want my children to grow up without a mom. I felt I had to end our lives to protect us from any grief or harm.

I had never felt so lonely and so sad in my entire life. I was in love with someone very much, but he didn't love me and never would. I had a very difficult time accepting that. But I had hurt him very much, and I could see why he could never love me.

When I was at John D. Long Lake, I had never felt so scared and unsure as I did then. I wanted to end my life so bad and was in my car ready to go down that ramp into the water, and I did go part way, but I stopped. I went again and stopped. I then got out of the car and stood by the car a nervous wreck.

Why was I feeling this way? Why was everything so bad in my life? I had no answers to these questions. I dropped to the lowest point when I allowed my children to go down that ramp into the water without me.

I took off running and screaming "Oh God! Oh God, no! What have I done? Why did you let this happen?" I wanted to turn around so bad and go back, but I knew it was too late. I was an absolute mental case! I couldn't believe what I had done.

I love my children with all my (a picture of a heart). That will never change. I have prayed to them for forgiveness and hope that they will find it in their (a picture of a heart) to forgive me. I never meant to hurt them!! I am sorry for what has happened and I know that I need some help. I don't think I will ever be able to forgive myself for what I have done.

My children, Michael and Alex, are with our Heavenly Father now, and I know that they will never be hurt again. As a mom, that means more than words could ever say.

I knew from day one, the truth would prevail, but I was so scared I didn't know what to do. It was very tough emotionally to sit and watch my family hurt like they did. It was time to bring a peace of mind to everyone, including myself.

My children deserve to have the best, and now they will. I broke down on Thursday, Nov. 3, and told Sheriff Howard Wells the truth. It wasn't easy, but after the truth was out, I felt like the world was lifted off my shoulders.

I know now that it is going to be a tough and long road ahead of me. At this very moment, I don't feel I will be able to handle what's coming, but I have prayed to God that he give me the strength to survive each day and to face those times and situations in my life that will be extremely painful. I have put my total faith in God, and he will take care of me.

SUSAN V. SMITH - 11/3/94 5:05 PM

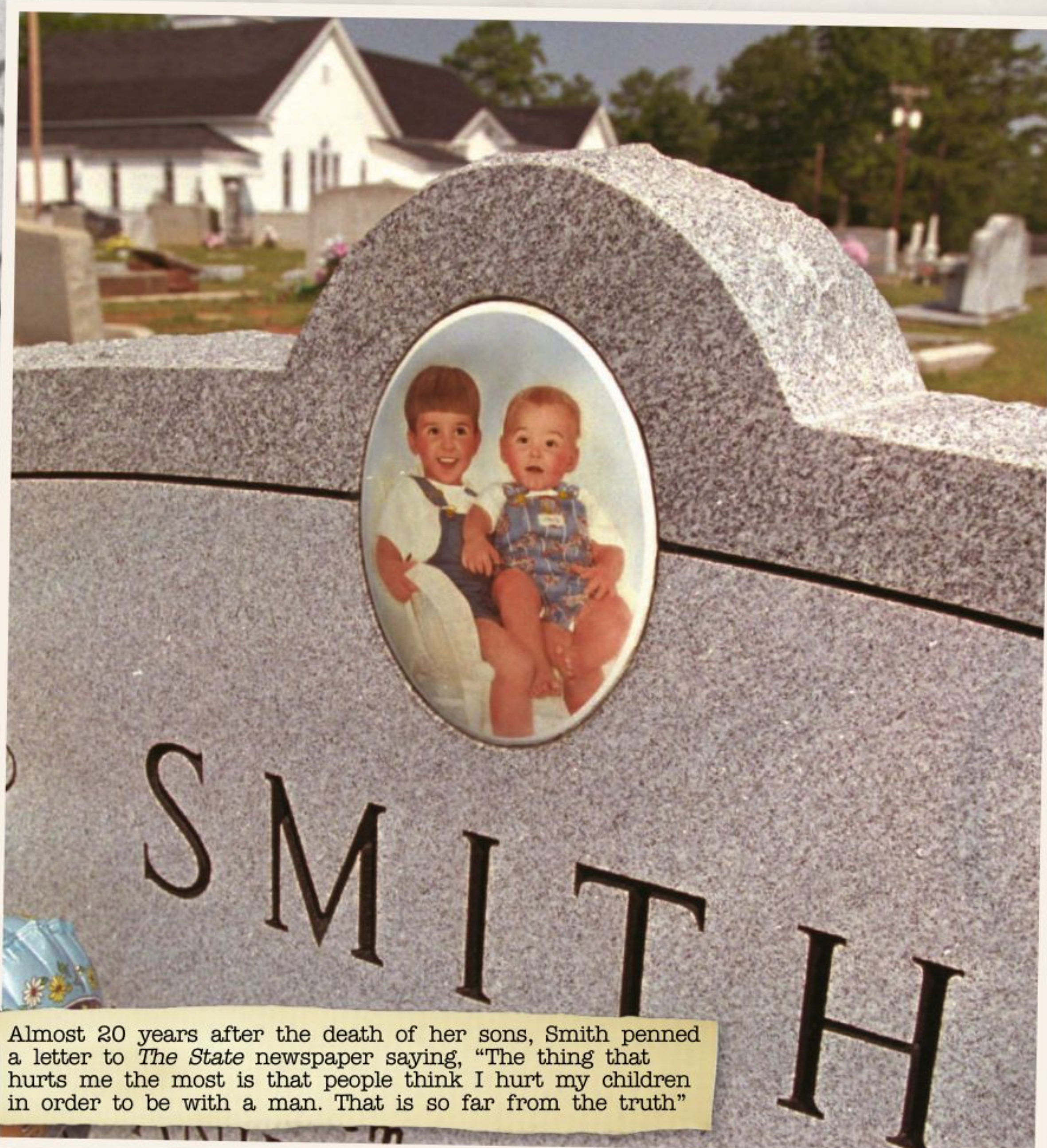


14-month-old Alex from day care. She returned later that afternoon to tell Findlay that she had lied about sleeping with his father but was escorted from his office, before she returned home. Still obsessing over the breakup, Smith called another friend that evening who had been at dinner with Findlay, as well as other friends, to ask if her former lover had mentioned her. When she learned that he had not spoken of her at all, Smith strapped her children into her Mazda Protegé and drove around looking for the answers to how she could fix all of her problems.

THE RED LIGHT

Slamming her fists in to a stranger's door, Smith cried out for help, wailing in to the wooden frame that someone had stolen her car and taken her children. The family inside called 911 and the FBI were informed along with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division. When the police arrived, Smith told a tale of unimaginable horror. She explained to them how she had been stopped at the traffic light behind the Monarch Hill Textile Plant at Highway 49, when a "black man" hopped in to the car armed with a gun. With his weapon lodged in her side, he ordered her to drive.

As they approached the access road to John D Long Lake, the assailant had told her to pull over and get out. Smith said she had begged the man to let her unload her two children but that her pleas had fallen on deaf ears. "I'll take care of them", the stranger told her as he accelerated away with her children strapped in to the back seats. "I love y'all," she said she had cried out as her children sped out of focus. There had been no witnesses to this event, she told police; the intersecting road where she had been carjacked was empty at the time, no cars or passersby had been around to help her.



Almost 20 years after the death of her sons, Smith penned a letter to *The State* newspaper saying, "The thing that hurts me the most is that people think I hurt my children in order to be with a man. That is so far from the truth"

ABOVE Sociologist Arlene Andrews testified that Smith lived two lives. On the surface, she appeared normal, "a quiet person with a sweet personality." But beneath the facade, Smith's life was "chaos and confusion"

The police had a composite sketch drawn up of the person who had taken her children, however, this was a difficult task as Smith's recollection of the kidnapper was vague, and she hesitated in giving viable and valuable details on his appearance. Smith said he was a black male, aged between 30 and 40 years old, around 1.8 metres tall and weighing approximately 175 pounds. She went in to further detail, describing how the man had dark hair, dark eyes, was of medium build and was wearing jeans, a grey knitted cap and a plaid shirt. This threw up some problems for the local police, because the generic description made it difficult to identify a prime suspect. The rendering was taped to every store in the Union county. Meanwhile, members of the African-American community were randomly stopped and questioned about the abduction.

Almost within hours of her reporting her children missing, detectives suspected something odd about Smith's story. Despite her trauma, she kept changing the details. However, on camera, Smith's grief failed to waiver. "I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't do anything but think about them. I just want to hug them so bad and tell 'em I love 'em," Smith sobbed alongside her ex-husband, in what was to be an appeal to the carjacker who had taken her children. The Smith couple were both given lie detector tests and while David passed, the mother's results were inconclusive. However, a police officer offered the explanation that it would not be uncommon for a traumatised mother to make conflicting statements.

“ WITHIN HOURS OF HER REPORTING HER CHILDREN MISSING, DETECTIVES SUSPECTED SOMETHING ODD ABOUT SMITH'S STORY ”

NINE DAYS OF DECEIT

Union, at the time of the abductions was a quiet town of 10,000 residents, startled by the tragedy that had occurred on their doorstep. While the "city of hospitality" (as it was well known) continued to look for the missing boys, and divers scoured the nearby waters, the police were growing suspicious that the hunt should be conducted much closer to home. They had followed multiple dead-end leads and had made no progress towards finding the missing children. Why had a male carjacker taken them and not their mother? If the robbery was motivated by money, then why had they taken the children but not called demanding ransom?

On 3 November, Smith's flat and monotone voice denied the allegations that were now starting to circle about her involvement in her children's disappearance: "It hurts to know I would be accused or even thought that I would ever do anything to harm my children. As a mother it's only a natural instinct to protect your children from any harm, and the hardest part of this whole ordeal is not knowing if your children are getting what they need to survive and it hurts real bad." In the same breath she added, "Michael and Alex I love you and we're going to have the biggest celebration when you get home." She and David had appeared on all three major morning TV shows in the US to appeal for the safe return of their children, but within hours, investigators came to realise that they were closing in on Smith's lies.

Smith had claimed that there were no witnesses to the events that night, but her story was making less and less sense to the police as time went on. At the junction where she said she was carjacked, the traffic light would only ever turn red if there was an oncoming car in the opposite direction that had activated a pressure pad on the intersecting road.



In court, Smith's brother told the jury, "I don't think Susan knew what she was doing... The Susan I know was not at the lake that night"

Therefore, if Smith had been stopped at the red light as she insisted, there had to be someone else on the other side of the junction, and they would have seen the assailant. But Smith was insistent that there were no witnesses. So how had she come to stop at a red light that night?

Police decided that they would use a slightly unorthodox (but legal) tactic to entice Smith's confession. They had planned to present Smith with a fake newspaper article about a woman who had killed her children, served her time and gone on to marry a rich, successful businessman. They would then allow her to speak to the woman, actually an undercover agent, hoping that if the shame didn't prompt a confession then the hope of life after prison would. Before this plan could be enacted, though, Sheriff Howard Wells met Smith in a quiet room inside the First Baptist Church. Looking directly into her eyes, he told Smith, "This couldn't have happened the way you said." Smith asked Wells to pray with her. When she had signed off her plea to her God, she told the officer, "I'm so ashamed. I'm so ashamed," and asked for his gun. Wells refused, and Smith broke down in tears. Through her sobs came the revelation investigators had suspected from the start. "My children are not alright", she said before she confessed that she had killed them.

During what the judge ruled as an (admissible) confession, Smith detailed how, devastated that she had lost "her best friend" Findlay's affections, she contemplated suicide. She said that she felt that she had failed her children as a mother, but did not want them to suffer from her actions the way she had done from her own father's. Parked on the verge of John D Lake, she had released the handbrake and waited for

the car to roll in to the murky waters. Then she pulled the handbrake up, consumed by her conscience. Smith had then climbed out of the car, leaving Michael and Alex strapped in to their seats, pulled the handbrake off again and allowed the car to tumble in to the waters and sink. Smith, safely on the shore, then ran and began her elaborate lie to protect her reputation, "afraid" to admit that no one would ever see her children alive again.

"SINCERELY, SUSAN"

The collective gasp has long echoed in the ear of SLED chief Robert Stewart, who announced to the press that the bodies of Alex and Michael had been recovered from a sunken car in John D Lake, and that their mother had been arrested for murder. Smith's trial was scheduled for July 1995, where it soon became a very real possibility that she would face the death penalty. Union Judge William L Howard Jr barred cameras from the courtroom, determined that the trial would not turn into a media spectacle. In South Carolina, a trial is split in to two parts. It determines first the verdict of the accused and then, if found guilty, the penalty for their crimes.

Despite the fact that her attorney argued that Smith was not guilty by reasons of insanity and that she was suffering from depression, a jury unanimously found Smith guilty, a simple decision considering she had confessed both orally and in a written statement.

The defence painted a picture of an emotionally fragile woman who had suffered a lifetime of betrayal, vulnerability and deep-seated depression, who had acted as she had out



ABOVE During a re-enactment of the Smith boys' murder, investigators showed how Susan's car had taken six minutes to sink. The windscreen had smashed as it hit the bottom of the lake



HER BARE FACED LIE

WHAT WERE THE TELLTALE SIGNS SPOTTED BY INVESTIGATORS AND EXPERTS THAT GAVE AWAY SMITH'S DECEITFUL SECRET?

BIO | DR LILLIAN GLASS

Dr Lillian Glass is a body-language and communication expert based in Florida, USA. She is also an author and litigation consultant who has commented on multiple high-profile crime cases.

“CROCODILE TEARS”

According to Dr Glass, Susan Smith cried “crocodile tears” when she was talking about her children on TV. “There were no tears and her recovery time from her mock ‘sad’ facial expression was too quick for it to be genuine.”

TONE OF VOICE

“Her inflection was upwards when she presented her plea to the public that the children needed to ‘come home with their mommy and daddy,’” said Dr Glass. “As she said this, she shook her head ‘no’. If she was telling the truth she would have nodded her head ‘yes’ as she said this.” When Smith denied having killed her children during her final interview, Dr Glass commented that the sound of her voice was the most telling aspect of all, as it was monotone.

TELL-TALE SMILE

According to the body-language expert, Smith “leaked out a sudden smile” during certain interviews, an expression that was “out of context” given that she was supposed to be sad and grieving, which further illustrates she knew what she had done. “She was in essence smiling that she duped everyone,” said Dr Glass. “It is as though the inappropriate smile comes out of nowhere in the wrong context of what she is saying.”

of emotional turmoil. The prosecutors, however, described a selfish, manipulative woman who had killed her children because the man she desired didn’t want children. While Smith was ruled as competent to stand trial, she did not testify and did not make a statement to jurors before deliberations began. A psychiatrist testified that Smith might attempt to sabotage her defence if allowed to testify, she wanted to die and might see her trial as an attempt to demand death.

In court, during the penalty phase of the trial, Russell admitted his heinous crimes against his stepdaughter and that he bore some responsibility for her emotional issues. He pleaded with the jury not to execute her. He revealed that the pair had last engaged in a sexual relationship just two months before the murders.

The divers who found the car at the bottom of John D Lake told the court of their findings. Although they had searched that very lake in the early days of the investigation, they had only had to expand their search a further three metres in order to discover Smith’s abandoned burgundy vehicle. Diver John Morrow told the court how he had seen a tiny hand pressed up against the glass as he approached the sunken, upturned vehicle.

The jury members were also shown a reconstruction video of the crime scene. As they watched an identical car sink to the bottom of the lake slowly and mercilessly, they contemplated who Smith really was to have done such a terrible thing. “For nine days she manipulated David, their families, the community, the nation, the world,” said Union County solicitor Tommy Pope. “She looked every one of us in

the eye and lied.” On 29 July, after a two-week trial, the nine men and three women of the jury deliberated for two and a half hours, before deciding to sentence Smith to life in prison. It was recommended she be considered for parole after 30 years, in 2024, and to this day she sits in a prison cell.

For a while after the town’s ordeal, members of the African-American community in Union were left with a bad taste in their mouths due to Smith’s allegations that a black man had taken her children, with the Union community effectively sharpening their pitchforks as a result. Even from inside the prison walls of the women’s correctional centre in Columbia, Smith still craves affection and attention. On two occasions, prison guards have been caught having sex with Smith despite stressed warnings that she should not be left alone with male correctional officers. Smith has since been transferred to Leath Correctional Institution in Greenwood. At the age of 40, she attempted suicide once again. Officers discovered a gruesome scene after the desperate inmate slashed her wrists with a smuggled-in razor. Smith has also apparently struck up relationships with other women behind bars, as well as with male pen pals. In letters she wrote to Columbian newspapers in 2015, which are ironically signed “Sincerely, Susan,” she says that she “is not the monster society thinks I am. I am far from it.”

“SMITH BROKE DOWN. THROUGH HER SOBS CAME THE REVELATION INVESTIGATORS HAD SUSPECTED FROM THE START”



SHE MADE THEM INTO SOAP



Despite the humour with which she later recalled her crimes, Leonarda's unlined face in this police mugshot doesn't hint at the emotional turmoil that led to her actions

A GENTLE SMILE PLAYS ON LEONARDA'S LIPS, PERHAPS PONDERING THE TASTE, TEXTURE AND SCENT OF THE WOMEN SHE MURDERED

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON

Sometimes, when life becomes unbearably tough, one may find respite in doting on others. Preparing a simple cup of tea may suffice, but for some, creating delicious, mouth-watering fancies for the feast of loved ones is the only way to raise the spirits – along with the sugar level. Dispensing with both motherly duties and those of a housewife, Leonarda Cianciulli murdered three women and made their bodies into tea cakes, candles and soap following a life of elopement, dabblings with the occult and the eventual authorship of her own cannibalistic cookbook-cum-memoir. She became known as the Soap-Maker of Correggio, her tale a strange recipe of determination to rise from the flames for her family, no matter what the cost.

The woman who would grow up to be a devoted matriarch was born in 1893 in the small town of Montela in Italy. It was a traditional town, but Leonarda was born to a mother whose feelings towards her had been poisoned from the start, because the youngster's very life was the result of sexual assault.

A CHILDHOOD OF WOE

Surrounded by glowering mountains that would glisten when the sky was grey with heavy snowfall, Leonarda was not a happy child and tried to remove herself from the world not



once but twice, surviving both times. With the weather taken as an indicator of God shaking his fists at the world, it is no surprise that superstition led to soothsayers, Leonarda's mother being considered one of them. This may have left the small child with no doubt that life's problems could be clarified by the occult.

After surviving into adulthood, Leonarda came to her first great obstacle. This emotionally delicate damsel had grown into a determined woman, and she had fallen in love with Raffaele Pansardi, a lowly office worker. Spurning the beau her mother had arranged for her to increase the family income, Leonarda eloped with her love. Her mother, enraged at Leonarda's defiance and not being allowed to attend the wedding, cursed the marriage, dooming the pair's children to die. It was a proclamation that the young Leonarda would take to heart.

Determined to outrun the wicked woman's words, the lovers fled to Lariano, in the south of Rome. It is a place with deep blue skies, where she and Raffaele conceived 17 children together to play and fill her heart with joy. It is practically impossible not to feel for Leonarda considering what happened next. While infant mortality was still comparatively high in the early to mid-20th century, advances in medicine were improving disease control. Nevertheless, one by one, not one, not two, but ten of Leonarda's children died. Three more left her before birth via miscarriage.

Leonarda fiercely protected her remaining four infants and was determined to love them more than life itself. She visited every fortune teller she could find in hope of changing her family's fate. One told her that she would spend her final days in prison and in an insane asylum, another that she would actually witness the death of all of her offspring.

The world itself then shook with an earthquake that reduced her home to rubble. Some may have given up, but not Leonarda; she simply upped sticks and started again.

THE WISE WOMAN

Around this time, if you had wandered alongside the canal of the Correggio Valley in Northern Italy on a sun-bleached afternoon, you might find your nose tingling at the scent of freshly baked bread mingling with the woodsy, wild aroma of herbs nodding nonchalantly in her garden. As you drew closer to the shop she'd established in her pretty, white cottage, you may hear the hum of shared gossip as locals bought her baking. Stoop at the door and you may even catch snippets of secrets as she was paid to read visitors' fortunes, just as her mother had done before her. Leonarda had started soothsaying as a way of safeguarding her family, learning the hidden arts as a shield and to pay to put food in her growing children's bellies. A poet, her words were wonderful to hear, particularly as she realised that tales of good fortune worked more wonders than predictions of woe for her clients. Streams of the smiling and sated would meander back home as the sun went down, safe with the knowledge that her potions in their pockets would help them along their way. Leonarda had an uncanny knack for charming everyone she met. Unknown to her, another had been studying her to what would become devastating effect.

Shrapnel of the terribly real kind began to blaze across the skies in 1939 with the thrum of war on the horizon. Giuseppe, Leonarda's oldest child, now a thoughtful young man inspired, perhaps, by his mother's community spirit, was determined to help his country. Of all the children Leonarda had loved and lost (and though a mother will rarely admit it), he was her favourite. She was terrified for him.

Leonarda cracked. Maybe her combination of unbelievably bad luck and the locals' belief in her ability to perform the impossible made Leonarda lose her grip on reality and think that she could save her son. All of the magical lore she had studied taught her one thing: a life for a life – Leonarda thought she could stop her son's military manoeuvres with murder.

COOK, POT! COOK!

Unfortunately, it is at this point in the story that any sympathy we may hold for Leonarda evaporates. She not only committed murder, she killed someone who trusted her as a friend. Faustina Setti had long been a guest at the sorceress's shop and offered Leonarda her life savings in exchange for matchmaking services. Leonarda told Faustina she would meet her love soon, in fact he was already waiting for her in a city not too far away. The spell for success was sealed with secrecy when Leonarda asked Faustina to write letters that would be posted to her friends to reassure them that she was well when she vanished to meet him.

The exchange done, Leonarda fed the lady a drugged drink, waited for her to drift into a daze, picked up a hatchet and smashed her in the head with it. The village cook dodged the spew of sticky blood that the body vomited in globules all over the wall like an angry sunset. Faustina's 30,000 lire was more than enough to pay for a new paint job and Leonarda believed she had saved her precious son in the process.



ABOVE Leonarda was a well-liked woman in the small town of Correggio, but she betrayed three of her friends' trust and shocked the close community

“ SHE VISITED EVERY FORTUNE TELLER SHE COULD FIND IN HOPE OF CHANGING HER FAMILY'S FATE. ONE TOLD HER THAT SHE WOULD SPEND HER FINAL DAYS IN PRISON ”



SOAP AND CAKES

LEONARDA TARGETED LADIES WHO TRUSTED HER, LURING THEM TO HER LAIR WITH LOFTY PROMISES, THEN KILLING THEM



FAUSTINA SETTI
KILLED IN 1939

An older lady, Ms Setti was a life-long romantic who simply wanted love. On giving Leonarda her life savings, she was told she would be smuggled to Pola (north-east Italy) to meet a new sweetheart and have a spell cast to secure the union.



FRANCESCA SOAVI
KILLED IN 1940

Miss Soavi was a teacher who had money worries. For 3,000 lire, Leonarda told her that she had arranged for her to take a new position in a girls' school in Piacenza. Miss Soavi was murdered when she went to bid Leonarda goodbye.



VIRGINIA CACIOPPO
KILLED IN 1940

Ms Cacioppo was an ageing opera singer who had seen her parts diminish as she became less able to perform the roles. For 50,000 lire and decadent jewellery, Leonarda had promised to find her secretarial work in Florence.



Now for disposal: taking up her implements, Leonarda collected the blood, created nine Faustina cutlets and popped them in her kettle to cook, thanking the eyes in the sagging head as she did so. But this wasn't any murder, this was a Leonardo Cianciulli murder. So Leonarda prepared pastries from the porcelain flesh of her victim. The first rule of baking is to get back to base elements. Sodium is extremely caustic and is used in home products such as bleach as well as being the partner of pepper in cooking. It eats away at the tissues with which it is placed in contact and so was poured in Leonarda's kettle with great vigour. By filleting Faustina, she made it easier for the furious substance to do its work while it was boiling in the pot. Leonarda spent the night with a rag over her wrinkled nose, watching the body slough off the bone into a slurry, blackish sludge. When the stuff cooled, it was tipped into buckets destined for septic tanks.

Still, the most important part of the task beckoned: following occult traditions, she began to bake the blood. When it had dried to a powdered and passable visual substitute for chocolate, she beat the blood into eggs, sugar, milk and cocoa. What emerged from her baking tray were neat, crunchy ceremonial biscuits that she took delight in feeding to the villagers gossiping as to the whereabouts of their disappeared friend.

However, Mussolini entered the war and Leonarda panicked that her sacrifice hadn't cut the mustard. It didn't take her long to plan her next course of action with Francesca Soavi, another friend whose life had not panned out in the way she'd imagined. The sneaky chef offered the downtrodden dame the same deal as Faustina: the guarantee of travel to a new start on payment for a ritual. Leonarda even repeated the same steps, only this time, she maximised

the 'waste-not, want-not' mentality by shaping the lady's fat into soap and candles. She even lit some of the candles as a representation of her son's passage to safety. Secure with her newly found salary, she started giving her 'products' away.

But living entirely off the fat of the land can make a person greedy, and it wasn't long before Leonarda encountered her third and final victim, Virginia Cacioppo, who also wanted flight. This lady went the same way, with Leonarda recalling "her flesh was fat and white". She went on, "When it had melted, I added a bottle of cologne, and after a long time on the boil I was able to make some most acceptable creamy soap... The cakes, too, were better: that woman was really sweet." The letter about the dead lady's new life (courtesy of her killer) found its way to her family within days.

However, the key to cookery is to correctly predict how all of the ingredients will work together and not to hurry the process: in her rush to get Virginia's payment, Leonarda turned the heat on herself. She committed all of the murders in this one town in quick succession. Her final victim's sister-in-law knew the woman would never break off contact, noted the similarities between the cases, and promptly called the police. They visited the perplexing pudding maker and were astounded when Leonarda confessed immediately.

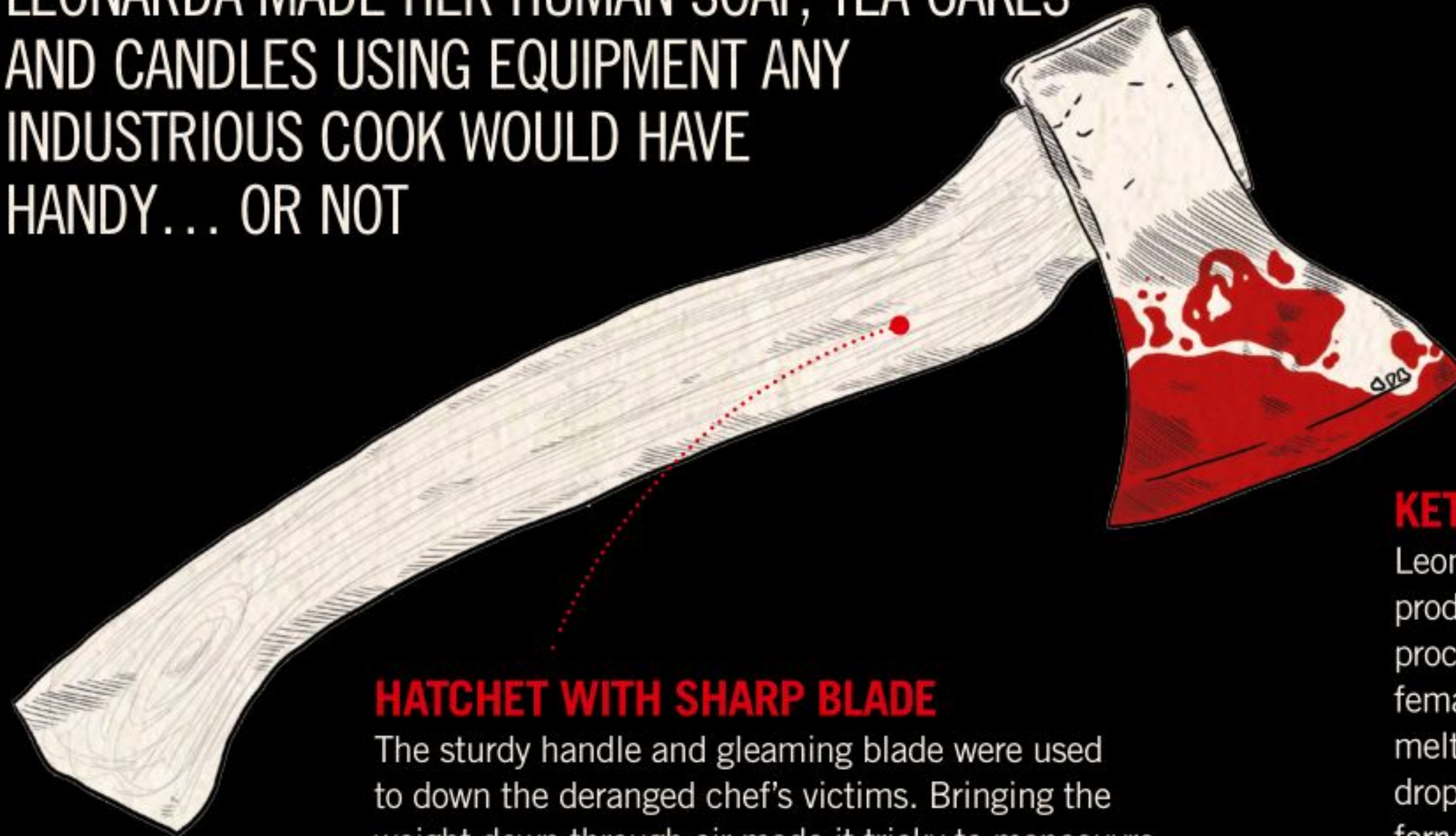
CORREGGIO'S CELEBRITY CHEF

Media-christened as the Soap-Maker of Correggio, Leonarda was brought to trial in 1946. No doubt utterly deranged by 50 years of emotional turmoil, she corrected the prosecution on their inaccuracies. For instance, her maternal sternness reared its head when it was assumed that Giuseppe must have helped with the murders. Leonarda was quick to put

ABOVE Her brow only slightly creased, Leonarda takes a finger-pointing questioning from Professor Filippo Saporito, who had been engaged by the court to comment on her mental state

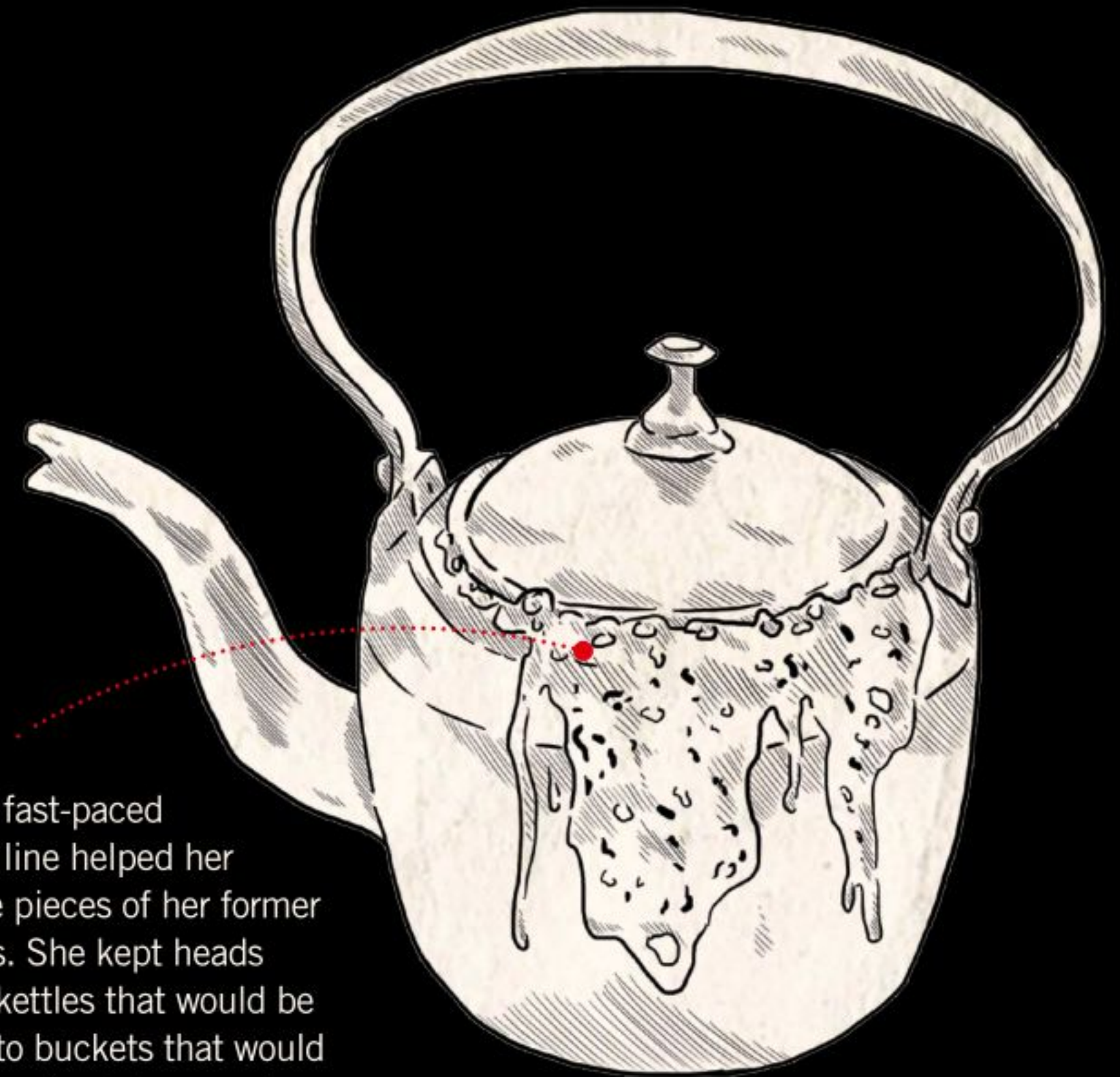
CIANCIULLI'S KITCHEN

LEONARDA MADE HER HUMAN SOAP, TEA CAKES AND CANDLES USING EQUIPMENT ANY INDUSTRIOUS COOK WOULD HAVE HANDY... OR NOT



HATCHET WITH SHARP BLADE

The sturdy handle and gleaming blade were used to down the deranged chef's victims. Bringing the weight down through air made it tricky to manoeuvre and hit on target – Leonarda needed several attempts with her first victim.



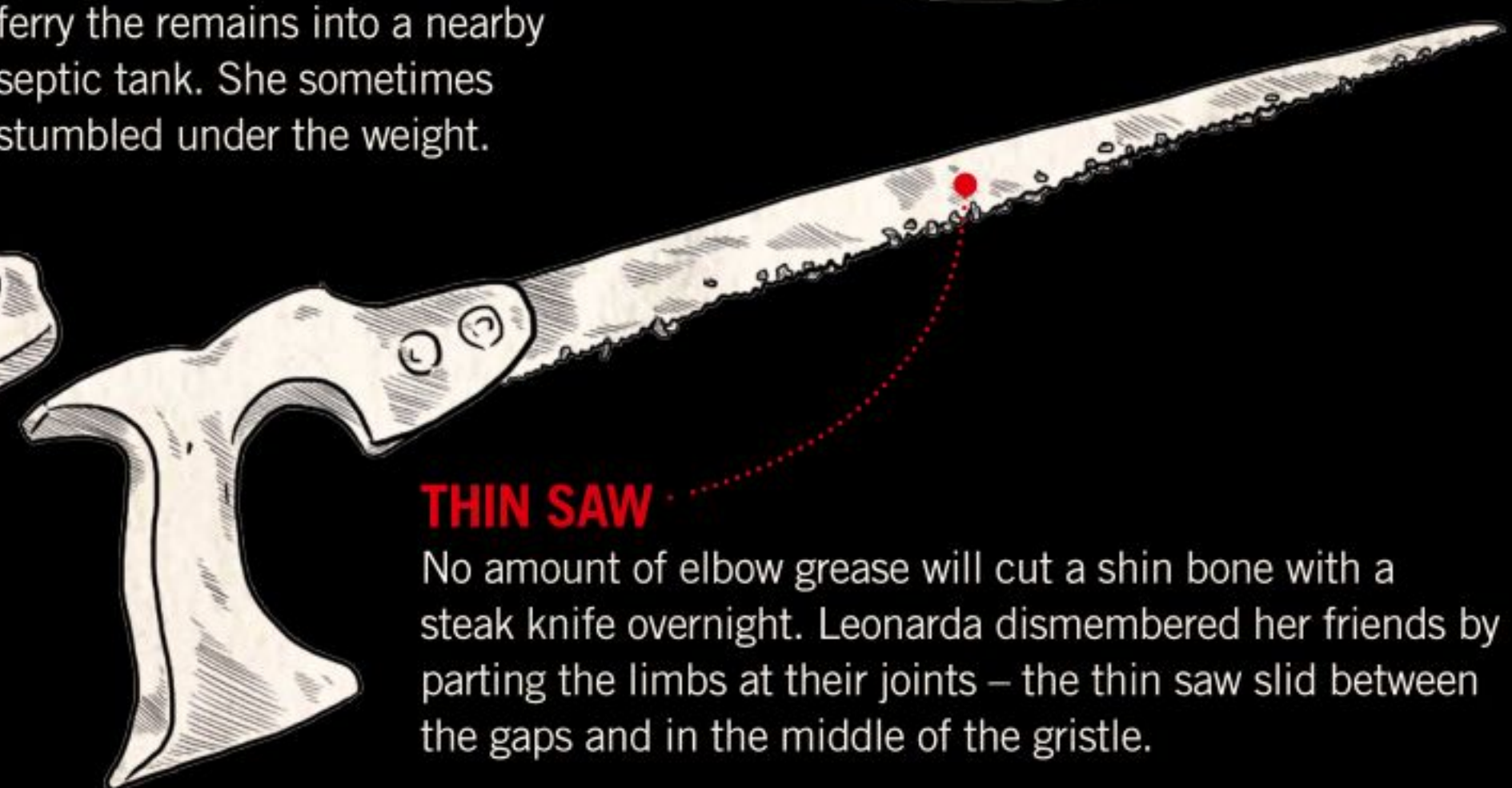
KETTLE

Leonarda's fast-paced production line helped her process the pieces of her former female pals. She kept heads melting in kettles that would be dropped into buckets that would ferry the remains into a nearby septic tank. She sometimes stumbled under the weight.



FLAT PANS

Once the gloopy mix was done, each person pattie was patted into a pleasing teacake shape and placed on a flat pan for the oven. Leonarda laid them out with love, convinced the ladies' 'sacrifice' would help to save her son (and give local gossips a mouthful to chew on).

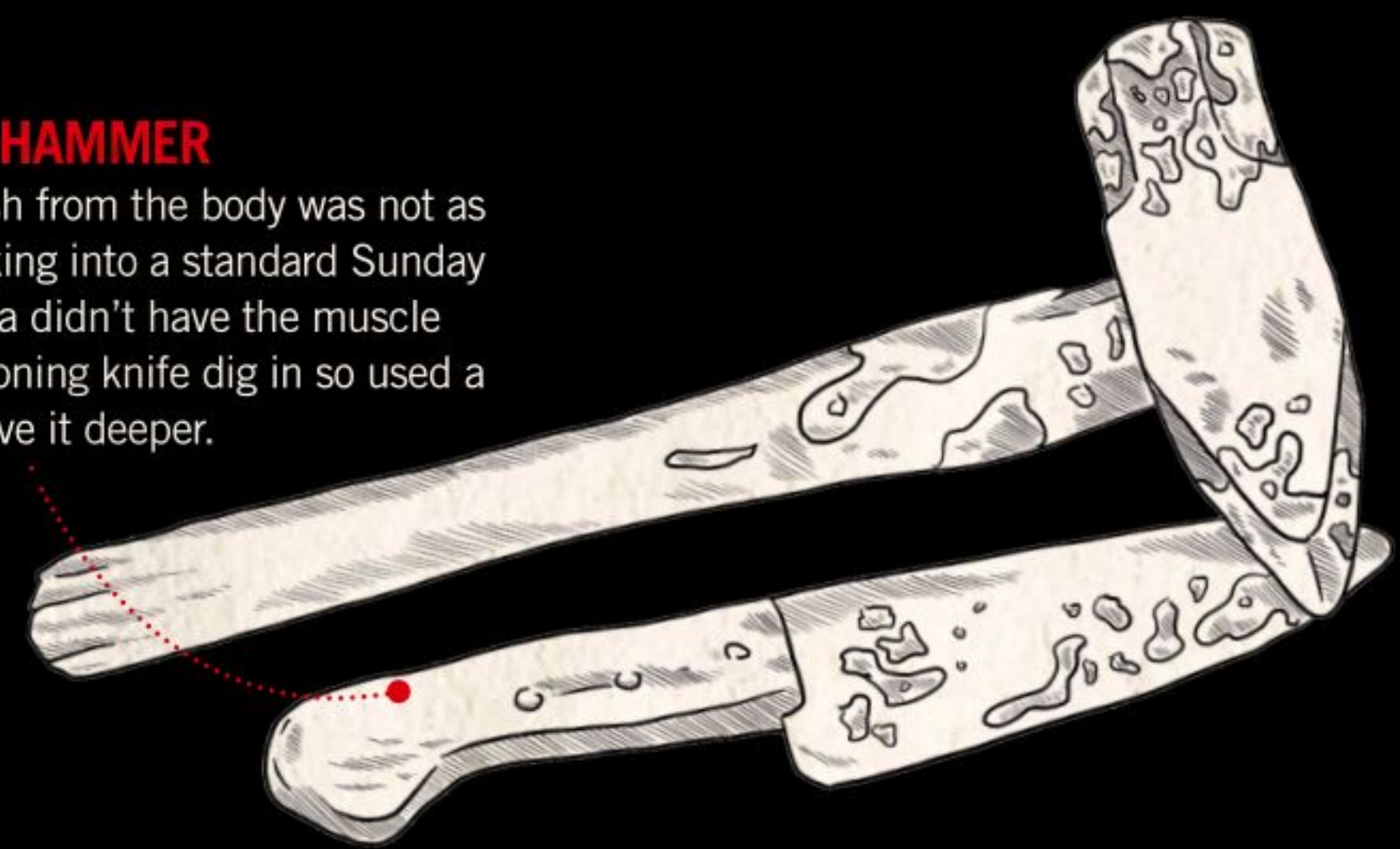


THIN SAW

No amount of elbow grease will cut a shin bone with a steak knife overnight. Leonarda dismembered her friends by parting the limbs at their joints – the thin saw slid between the gaps and in the middle of the gristle.

KNIFE AND HAMMER

Taking the flesh from the body was not as simple as tucking into a standard Sunday roast. Leonarda didn't have the muscle to make her boning knife dig in so used a hammer to drive it deeper.



them right; while he had disposed of some bones in a nearby river, he had not one clue as to what the carcass actually was.

Indeed, Leonarda was disturbingly proud to claim her diabolical 'achievements' in 'upcycling' the remains to feed and scrub people. Though cannibalism is taboo in many parts of the world, there are cultures where it has been overlooked. Even Christianity has the ceremony of communion at its core, where those seeking salvation eat a representation of the body of Christ as symbolic of his care. Though horribly twisted, Leonarda saw her crimes in a similar fashion, and as such an achievement that she wrote *An Embittered Soul's Confessions* to detail her methods, clubbing the snide gossips she could not otherwise speak out against. At the same time, she declared, "I gave the copper ladle, which I used to skim the fat off the kettles, to my country, which was so badly in need of metal during the last days of the war."

Psychiatrists could not decide if she was insane or gastronomically 'evil'. Regardless, the judge recognised

“ SHE MAXIMISED THE ‘WASTE-NOT, WANT-NOT’ MENTALITY BY SHAPING THE LADY’S FAT INTO SOAP AND CANDLES ”

her pride and misdemeanours as a recipe for disaster. She was sentenced to 30 years in prison, with three to be spent in an asylum. While the fortune teller's prophecy of her incarcerations came to pass, it is not known whether she outlived her remaining children.

It is almost impossible to make any sense of so traumatic a life or indeed such bizarre and gruesome crimes. It seems the only way to understand them is through boggled disbelief, with humour clotting desperation from the soul as it did for the murderess herself. Leonarda Cianciulli, the woman who changed from caring mother to killer cake maker, died in prison in 1970. She got her just desserts in the end.



Death House LANDLADY

THE SMELL OF BREAKFAST DRIFTED UPSTAIRS. IT MADE THE BEDROOM FEEL HOMEY RATHER THAN LIKE A HOSTEL. BUT BY NIGHT, THE DRUGGED TENANT AWAITED BURIAL IN THE BACK GARDEN...
COURTESY OF THE OLD LANDLADY

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON



Dorothea Puente was not your stereotypical grandma. After a life of bad luck with suitors, she suited herself to remain solvent by embarking on a criminal career that included involvement with brothels, forging cheques (from ex-partners), pocketing people's social security money and eventually moving into the murder game with tenants of the boarding house she ran in Sacramento, California. Jailed for life for three murders in 1993, she became known as the Death House Landlady.

SACRAMENTO'S SENIOR CITIZEN

The Dorothea who stood sour faced and frumpy in the court room was not the same woman who welcomed the weary – often disabled people, substance misusers and other vulnerable citizens – over her hostel threshold. That Dorothea was like a southern angel in disguise. Even as an older lady she had a dainty, girlish quality, with a delicate face, eyes accentuated by heavy liner and peroxide-blond hair. This contrasted against the heavy lines that scarred her visage. She had seen and experienced the highs and lows life could bring, and while there would be no nonsense, there would, it seemed, also be no judgement of her charges, and this is how she got into the line of work she did.

Dorothea was a sweet talker who could make her tenants feel not so alone. To the social workers who would visit to recommend her potential tenants, it was a case of a 'welcome home from home'. And what a home it was. A light and airy Victorian-style building, it was always spick and span. It was just a pity that the garden contained more than shrubs.

Some may raise eyebrows at a sweet old lady taking in hardened criminals, mob 'ma' style, so instead Dorothea's guests were those to whom you might say life had thrown a hard time. They were regulars at cold, grey, corrugated detox places where the addicted would wait for deliverance or death. Dorothea would make a point of searching them out in the darkened, dusty smoke rooms of ale houses to give them advice – a public service, if you will. She'd talk to them on the matter of how to increase their state benefits by telling The Man what he needed to know, and from there would invite them into her sanctuary. Sure, it was a trick of the trade against the social system, but then, surely (they may have reasoned), the social system wasn't just if it didn't help those in need? Dorothea described her charges to acquaintances as 'railway people' – those shunted from place to place and in need of someone to steer them on home.

BIG BERT

One such resident was Alvaro 'Bert' Montoya, a heavy-set gentleman with a bushy beard and anxious eyebrows. He was referred to Dorothea by an outreach worker concerned that a life on the street was no way to live for a person in his position. A kindly soul who would give anyone the shirt off his back, he was nevertheless plagued by the voices in his head that the medication for schizophrenia could not quell; his finger circling his head in a 'crazy' gesture yet cracking a hopeless, benign smile when describing his mental state.

“THE OFFICERS HAD A BONE TO PICK WITH MS PUENTE. PITY SHE'D ALREADY SKIPPED TOWN. WELL, SKIPPED INTO A TAXI TO STOCKTON AND JUMPED ON A BUS TO LA”



ABOVE Drab surroundings and unflattering clothes fail to disguise the fine, alert features of the hawk-like murderess

Dorothea took a shine to the gentle giant. While her other tenants paid \$375 a month for board and two square meals a day, Bert paid nothing. Indeed, much to the irritation of his housemates, he became the landlady's lapdog, with the no-nonsense hostel keeper giving him new clothes and even putting a tab down for him at a local bar. The relationship grew so close that he came to call her 'Mama'.

Dorothea was determined to keep the hostel (which she rented) in good working order, and residents were required to help out with the chores. If they didn't, they could hit the highroad, with several, such as Ben Fink, disappearing overnight. This seemed to happen during Dorothea's more strenuous projects, such as the time her team ripped out the house owners' rose beds to lay new patios. Dorothea would divide the tasks into tiny little chunks and make sure everyone got involved – it gave them something to do.

It was when Bert stopped helping that eyebrows were raised. It had been known that there were some issues at the house, as Bert had been seen to abuse Dorothea's hospitality and came home steaming drunk one day, shortly before taking himself across the city on foot one evening to detox. Folk simply attributed the episode to Bert's mental





ABOVE The stark orange digger screams against the dainty blue building as it burrows deep into the earth in search of the victims' bodies

BELOW While Puente was on the run, coroners' officers were excavating her gardens, knee deep in the decomposing remains of those who trusted her



state, with whispers of the supposedly haunted room in her house (occupied, it was said, by a suicide victim) not helping matters in terms of exacerbating the already present paranoia. Bert didn't come back. At all.

A man of that size and height doesn't vanish into dust. Knowing he had no family and nowhere to go, his social worker phoned the police. Several local clients had told her that there were... rumours. Sufficiently spooked, she asked the force to investigate the little piles of brown soil that would appear in the property's garden from time to time, saying – the God's honest truth – it looked like a graveyard.

THE HOUSE ON F STREET

Detective John Cabrera and his colleagues walked up to 1426 F Street and rapped on the smartly painted door. Peering out from behind her big, round glasses and inviting the nice officers in was little Dorothea. They didn't have a warrant, so were relying on her charity for co-operation. She set them up with a room in which to talk to the residents and offered to get some friends to help them dig up her lawn, naturally nervous (you'd think) of anything untoward on her property.

With his shirt sleeves rolled up, Detective Cabrera was knee deep in grime – the rubbish of years of tenants gone by – when he banged something hard. Thinking it was a stray root, he yanked it out and studied it. No reason to necessarily panic when the thing that surfaced was found to have a hip joint – these here are old houses. It's not unheard of for

AN IMAGE OF PHILANTHROPY

DOROTHEA WORKED HARD TO CREATE A PUBLIC IMAGE THAT WAS 100 PER CENT GOODLY GRANNY TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY FROM DISCOVERING HER DREADFUL DEEDS

CHURCH-GOER

Dorothea used taxis to go everywhere she went. Tipping generously and developing a friendly 'woman to woman' relationship with her driver, this included trips to the church on Sundays.

CASH DONATIONS

Known in Sacramento's political circles, Dorothea donated (some of her tenants') cash to good causes and was regularly honoured with songs dedicated to her name on local radio.

ELDERLY ADOPTEE

Dorothea was 'adopted' by the family who owned the hostel. They grew so close as to visit her in prison after she was convicted of the murders.

GOOD SAMARITAN

Generous to a fault, she provided bar tabs for those she termed important citizens in the hope of using their professional services – knowledge or criminal networks – to support her empire.

GOODWILL GIVEAWAYS

Hosting a hostel meant managing lodgers' discarded clothing, so Dorothea gave it to charity shops. It was a great way to get rid of evidence while also appearing socially conscientious.



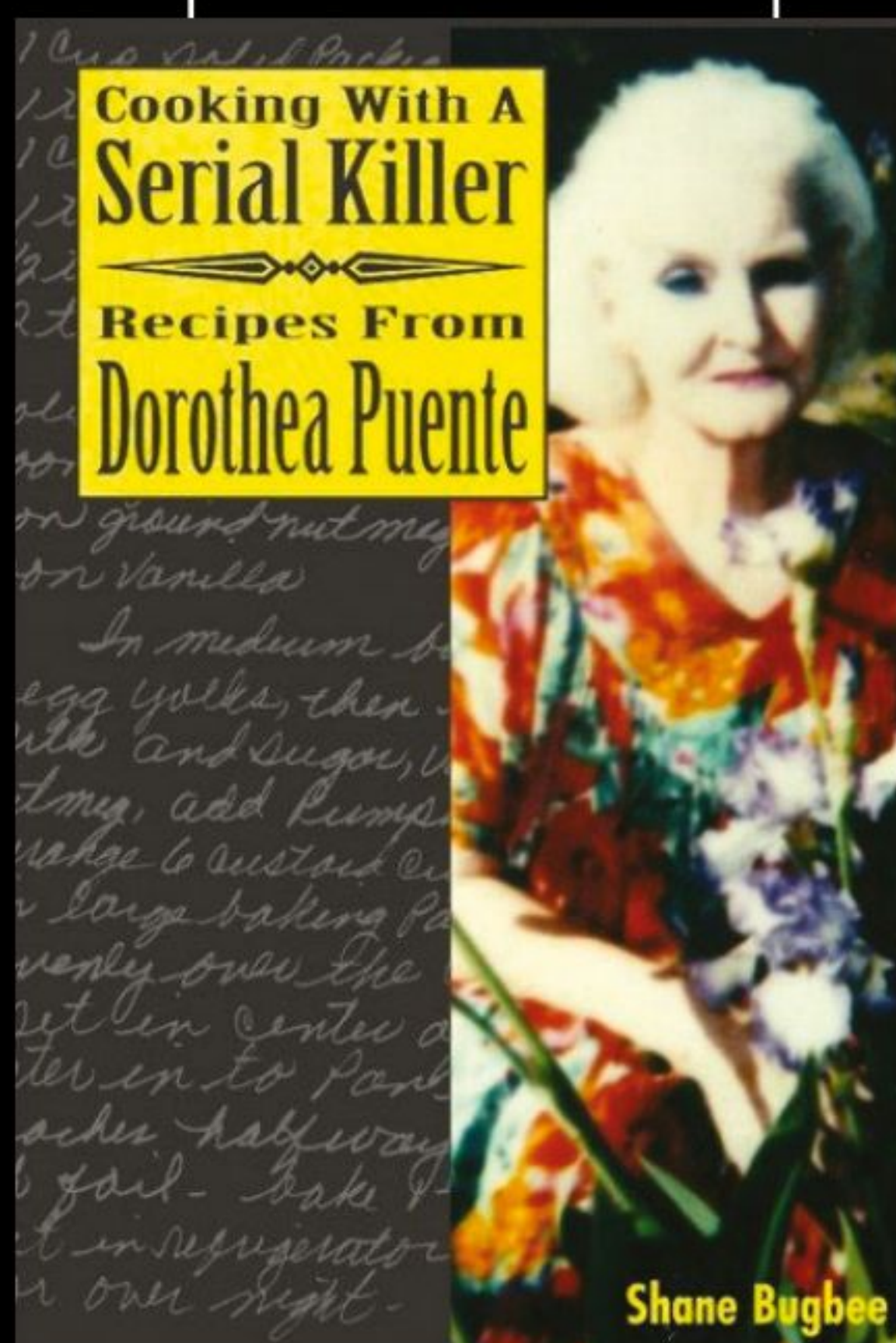
DROP IN ON DOROTHEA

HISTORY AND HORROR HOUSE GRAND TOUR FOR ALL GOOD CITIZENS (AND TOURISTS, TOO)

Sacramento has made a killing from its grisly history and has no less than incorporated the property into a local sight-seeing tour. As showcased on KCRA News, guests will be greeted by none other than the multiple-murdering 'madam' herself – Dorothea Puente: a mannequin complete with wig, specs and a fetching overcoat just like the real thing. Her former abode was a 'steal' at \$215,000 when bought at public auction by Barbara Holmes. It now has a pleasant sun terrace, retiled front steps, new kitchen accessories, a shower curtain of faux crime scene tape and a sign reminding all trespassers that they risk being buried in the old back yard, just like Dorothea's victims. There's even a grinning demon statue for those all important Instagram pics.

ABOVE Seven bodies were recovered from the garden on Puente's house on F Street, and she would be charged with murdering nine of the city's most vulnerable residents

BELOW "Dorothea Puente has been accused of a lot of things," so goes a newspaper review of her collaborative cook book effort with author Shane Bugbee, "...but being a bad cook isn't one of them"



residents to find remains of people buried who were too poor to afford a proper funeral in days gone by. Partly as a point of procedure, the coroner was called.

By the next day, the street got wind of the grot in grandma Dorothea's garden. TV crews converged, the street was sealed off and enterprising privateers started hawking "I dig Sacramento!" T-shirts from the end of the road. It was so frenetic that the lawmen escorted Dorothea (resplendent in her red coat, purple pumps and with a pretty pink umbrella) out of the street so she could have a quiet coffee around the corner with her nephew for two minutes' peace.

A find like this could be good for the sunshine state's local history. The area was known for its links with the gold rush, but a new finding (especially in a house built in 1895) might generate tourism... at least that was the thinking until a skull and other parts from different corpses in different parts of the garden came to light. The officers had a bone to pick with Ms Puente. Pity she'd already skipped town. Well, skipped into a taxi to Stockton and jumped on a bus to LA as soon as she turned the corner, to be more exact.

Later, a small, elderly woman sat herself on a bar stool next to a lone man. They drank together, laughed and arranged to meet again. For once, the lack of Tinder back in the day didn't matter because as soon as the mystery woman had left, the man saw her fugitive face beamed right back at him, fearsome size, on the TV. Swipe left to call the cops...

THE TENANTS TIME FORGOT

Seven bodies were recovered from her backyard. Blisterer Ben Fink (who had vanished during gardening season) was identified by his tattoo. Betty Palmer – resident of some years previous – was found relieved of her feet, hands and head (presumably to remove the possibility of identification).



ABOVE A body is removed from Puente's house. Onlookers initially expected the find to reveal something about the town, not the seemingly sweet lady living at 1426 F Street

Puente appeared in court dressed in a sober jumper and with immaculately coiffured hair



Another former tenant, Leona Carpenter, was found with her legs in a raised position with the earth underneath them, suggesting a struggle as she suffocated having been buried alive. Finally Bert, too, was identified. Each body was found to have traces of prescription substances. And of the hostel's haunted room? Pulling back the carpet, Detective Cabrera found traces of bodily fluid. The only definitely evil thing in there was the way in which the supposed philanthropist had stowed corpses until it was convenient to bury them.

LIFE-LONG LIAR

It is only at her trial that the full scale of Dorothea's deception became clear. While men were bringing up the bones among the marigolds in her backyard, her own skeletons were dropping out of the closet in court. She'd lied to everyone about the ledger of her entire life. Dorothea Helen Grey was born in Redlands, California. Several stories exist of her upbringing, from being a Mexican orphan through to having varying amounts of siblings. She'd moved from relationship to relationship, working in brothels and forging cheques as she went, leading to two stints in jail before she even became an old lady. Turns out that the whole time she'd been funding her boarding house empire (including some she had run before moving to the murder house) by persuading the residents to add her to their social security accounts. She'd withdraw the money on their behalf, give them cash and skim the rest for herself. It funded a lavish lifestyle said to include

jewellery, cocktails and even facelifts. Probation officers knew of her history, although it has been alleged by biographers that her sweet exterior and their high workloads meant they simply did not spot the signs of Dorothea's sadistic set-up.

Over the years, Puente had insulated herself from allegations of impropriety by becoming the town's benefactor and getting involved in political circles. That said, even with this, her murders could not be swept under the carpet.

Dorothea Puente checked in to the courthouse on nine charges of murder. Seven of these related to the decomposed bodies found at F street, another was the recent burial of Bert Montoya and another related to her former acquaintance, Everson Gillmouth, who was found in a homemade coffin by a river bank and whose social security cheques she had continued to withdraw. By the time her sojourn at court was finished, and at 64 years of age, Dorothea took her leave for life in prison in Chowchilla, convicted of three of the nine deaths. This was all that it was felt could be reasonably proved were her own doing, considering the impracticalities of disposing of bodies in the back garden on her own. Her tenant, Mervin John McAuley, was arrested as an accessory to murder but released without charge. How the bodies got beneath the soil remains a mystery.

Not one to keep things above board, Dorothea's time in prison was eventful and, ever the hostess from Hell, she actually collaborated to write *Cooking With A Serial Killer*, a recipe book with a picture of herself in a fancy floral frock on the front cover (just to make it pop). Longings still crept carefully within the creases of her greedy eye sockets.

The lost people of Sacramento met their deaths in the supposed safety of Dorothy Puente's hostel, but her lies were also the recipe for her own undoing – she died in jail on 27 March 2011 at the age of 82, having got her own just desserts. She maintained her innocence of the murders to the end.

“WHILE MEN WERE BRINGING UP THE BONES IN HER BACKYARD, HER OWN SKELETONS WERE DROPPING OUT OF THE CLOSET”



SHE DIDN'T LIKE MONDAYS

CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOOTER BRENDA SPENCER GAVE NO REAL REASON TO POLICE FOR TURNING HER GUN ON THE SCHOOL THAT MORNING. WHY DID SHE MURDER AND MAIM IN COLD BLOOD?

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

If you were to look at pictures of Brenda Spencer as a child, you would see a freckle spotted young girl with pale white skin and fiery red hair. You would also notice her beaming smile as she lovingly holds a kitten in both hands. It is a stark contrast to the pictures that dominate the media some years later, when that same girl, now a teenager, is frogmarched away from a her San Diego home just metres from a murder scene. On a frosty Monday morning Spencer had killed two

men, injured several young children and a police officer with a semi-automatic rifle. What was her reason for committing such a horrific act? "I don't like Mondays." The glib response sparked outrage from the public (and a number one hit for Irish rock band Boomtown Rats) and has resonated across decades. But US attorney Michael McGlinn, who first represented Brenda after she was arrested in 1979, told **Real Crime** that the grinning girl in the pictures grew up to be far



McGlinn argued that Spencer's father was somewhat responsible for the shooting having given a child a rifle and allowing her to keep it at hand

from happy. She wrote violent poems and stories involving the police, however, he doesn't think she really understood her actions that morning. He says that Spencer was troubled by life at home. But for those caught in the crossfire of an angry teenager, no excuse will ever be good enough.

OFF TARGET

Born 3 April 1962, Spencer lived in a middle-class neighbourhood in San Carlos, San Diego. Her parents, Dot and Wallace, remember her as a chirpy child who showed an interest in sports and photography, and had a love for animals, but when Spencer was nine years old, her parents divorced, an experience that greatly affected the young girl. Her mother moved out of the family home while she remained living with her emotionally unavailable father and two siblings. Wallace was a keen hunter and a gun enthusiast who regularly took his children, including his youngest daughter, out to the mountains to practice target shooting on birds and tin cans. Many regarded him as a bit of a loner who kept to himself and rarely socialised. Eventually, her brother and sister moved out and Spencer was left with her father.

McGlinn describes the Spencer home on Lake Atlin Avenue as a "disaster", laden with guns and empty bottles of alcohol, a home that had barely any furniture in it. Spencer's relationship with her parents was strained following their separation, McGlinn explained how Spencer's father "found fault in everything" Brenda did. When speaking about Spencer's mother he said emotionally, she was "like a stone" to her daughter. Spencer's once vibrant attitude changed in her teenage years and she became a shell of her former self, she bunked off of school, got into trouble with the police and took drugs.

Spencer's classmates recall how she "had a thing about guns." According to acquaintances at Patrick Henry High School, the shy redhead would boast about the collection of guns stored in her father's garage. They said she was "kind of weird" and had few friends. "Brenda was a tomboy," said McGlinn, "she hung around with a young man three years younger than her. She didn't dress like a girl or have girl friends." Children in her neighbourhood were also wary of her, a girl of a similar age to Spencer told newspapers she had been startled by a comment made by the teenage girl about wanting to "blow a police officer's head off." Conversely other neighbours remember how she had been "deeply unhappy that her mother wasn't around."

In 1978, Spencer's rebellious attitude grew increasingly worse, when she did occasionally turn up to class, teachers noticed she appeared to be asleep. That same year, Spencer got into trouble with the police after she shot out the windows of Grove Elementary, a school just across the street from her home, which she herself had attended at one time. As a result, Spencer was referred to a Youth Service Bureau where a probation officer directed her to speak to a psychiatrist. Spencer admitted that she was suicidal and her parents were informed of their daughter's deteriorating mental health, and advised that she should be hospitalised for depression. However, Spencer's father, who had sole custody of the children following the divorce, refused to give permission for her to go, he said he didn't see any reason to believe she was suicidal as she suggested.

Spencer later claimed her father had begun to molest her when she was nine years old and shortly after she began to wilt into depression. Wallace denied such allegations, although Dot openly said she was suspicious that something



ABOVE Spencer's mugshot from her arrest. She was submitted to psychiatric evaluation during her trial to determine her state of mind during the attack

unhealthy had developed in the household in her absence, but she told reporters that she hadn't the amenities or the proof to do anything about it. As the year drew to a close, Spencer's outlook was bleak, on Christmas morning she unwrapped a present from her father, although she had asked for a radio, she found herself gifted with a .22 Calibre Ruger rifle with a telescopic sight and 500 rounds of ammunition. Weeks later she told classmates she was going to "do something big to get on TV."

BAD CASE OF THE MONDAYS

On the morning of 29 January 1979, Wallace, an audio visual expert at the San Diego State University, left for work. Spencer decided, as she had many other mornings, that she would not be going to school. Across the road, Monday morning had barely begun for the students of Cleveland Elementary School. The principal, Burton Wragg, was opening the gates for the children five minutes before they were due to make their way inside, as he did every morning. Children dawdled outside before committing to the day of classes ahead of them.





From inside her home, Spencer grabbed her loaded gun from beneath her bed and aimed across the street as the students congregated outside the gates. The sound of 'firecrackers' prompted them turn around but in front of their eyes the scene suddenly turned sinister. One by one children cried out in agony as bullets blasted their tiny, unsuspecting bodies. Principal Wragg rushed to a child as they lay injured on the playground, but suddenly flailed backwards, landing in some bushes with his chest covered in blood. Teacher Daryl Barnes grabbed as many children as he could and pulled them into the school building, calling out for the school secretary to phone the police, before dashing back outside to rescue another pupil. More children were barricaded inside the school's auditorium for safekeeping as the horror

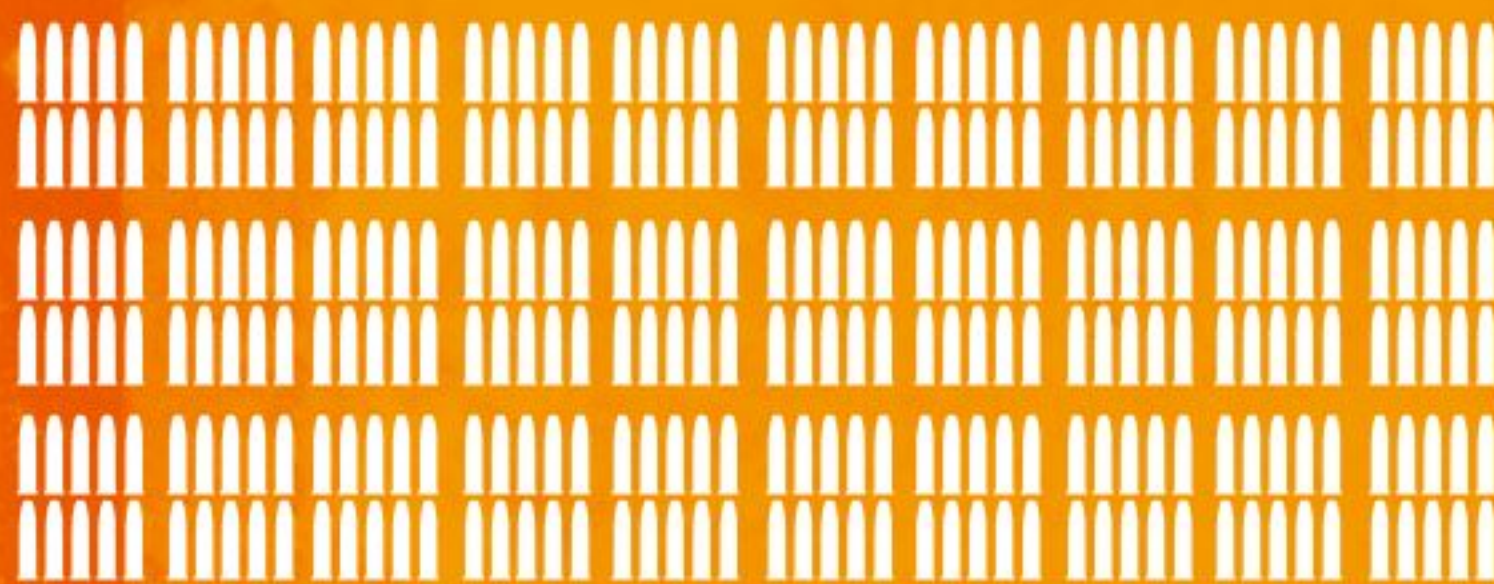
“TWO OF THE YOUNG VICTIMS, BOTH NINE YEARS OLD, WERE REPORTED AS BEING IN A CRITICAL BUT STABLE CONDITION FOLLOWING SURGERY FOR STOMACH WOUNDS”

ABOVE Burton Wragg (left) and Mike Suchar (right) died in order to protect the pupils of Cleveland Elementary School as Spencer began her mindless attack on the school

BRENDA SPENCER

THROUGH THE SNIPER'S SIGHT

WHEN POLICE FINALLY ARRESTED HER, THEY DISCOVERED THAT THE BODYCOUNT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN HIGHER



300

Rounds of ammunition were discovered in Spencer's home following her arrest

30

Shots had been fired before police blocked her view of the school with a truck

2

Innocent victims were killed, 56-year old custodian Mike Suchar and 53-year-old principal Burton Wragg

30 METRES

The distance between Spencer's home on Lake Atlin Avenue and Cleveland Elementary School



8

Children were shot as they lined up outside the school gates on Monday morning



Police officer, 28-year-old Robert Robb, was shot in the neck as the cops arrived on the scene

continued to unfold outside. School custodian Mike Suchar dashed to help the principal with a blanket in his hand intended to plug his bleeding wound, but he too was shot, "My God, I've been hit," he gasped before he collapsed in a heap on the tarmac.

When police arrived at the school gates a short while later, they inspected the direction from which the bullets were coming from. Approximately 30 metres away a gun-toting Spencer was moving from room to room in her parents' single-story home, repeatedly pulling the trigger of her gun without flinching at the screams that could be heard across the way. Watching through her telescopic sight she squeezed the trigger, shooting an officer in the neck. Police blocked the shooter's view of the school, and managed to escort the children from the site via the backdoor, loading the injured infants into the waiting ambulances while the others were loaded onto a bus and safely driven away from the scene. The halls of Alvarado hospital were bedlam as parents, informed that their children had been shot on the playground, cried out for their children. Some of the wounded infants were too shocked to make a sound as the hospital staff tended them.

Back on Lake Atlin Avenue, a SWAT team was deployed to the area across the street followed by the press, baying for answers. Who was shooting? Why? What grievance could they possibly have with the school to prompt such a

massacre? Spencer's attack on Cleveland Elementary was the first of its kind and the public hadn't been prepared for the scene that had unfolded on their doorstep that morning. Some ten years before this incident 25-year-old Charles Whitman had stood on the 28th floor of the University of Texas and shot at civilians below from the observation deck on the tower, killing and injuring 45 innocent people before being killed himself in a police standoff. But San Diego had yet to experience a shooting of this magnitude, especially one involving a school.

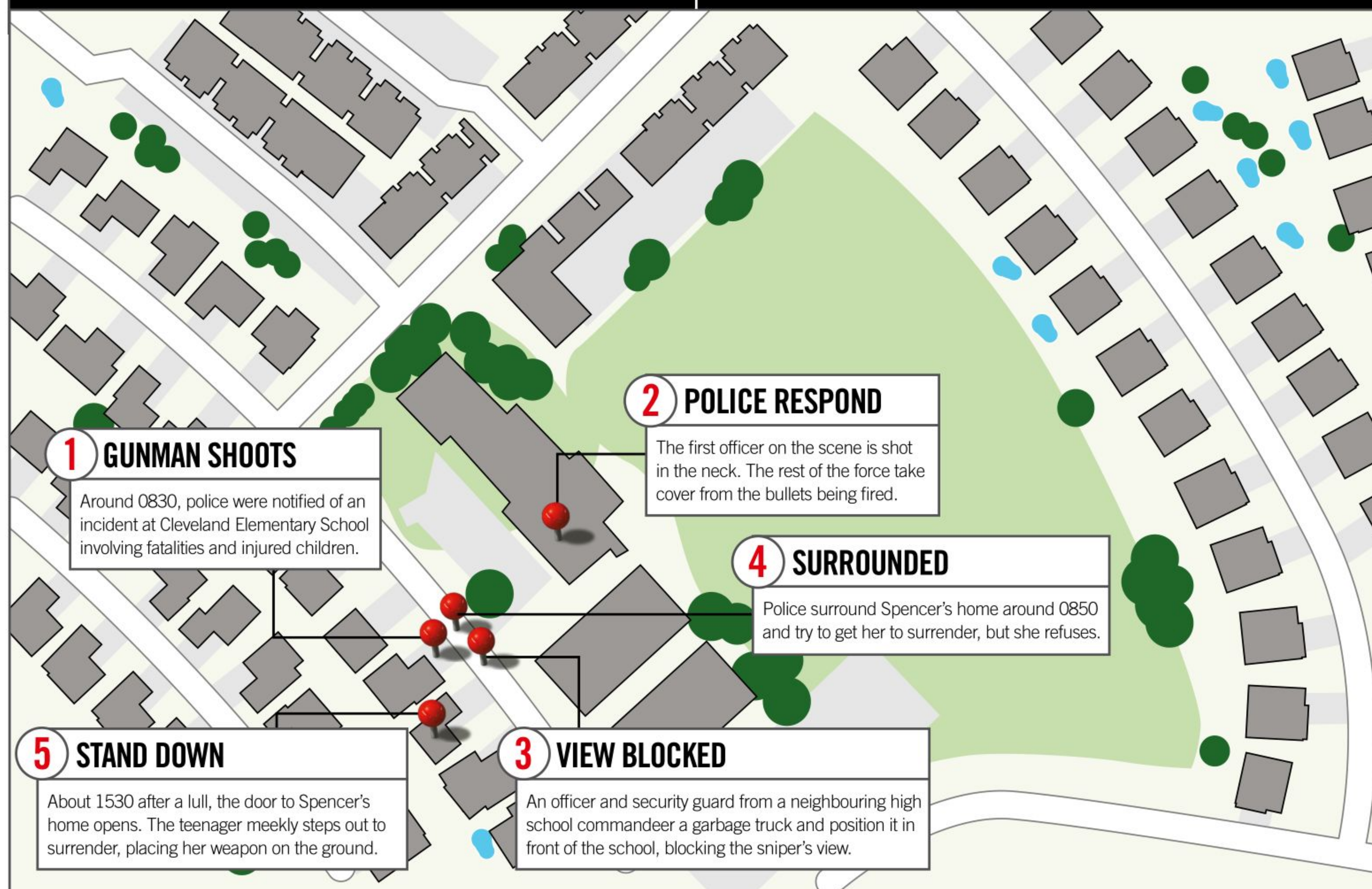
As the police made a beeline for her home, Spencer barricaded herself inside. When a journalist from the local newspaper, the *San Diego Tribune*, phoned Spencer's landline and asked if she knew where the bullets were coming from, Spencer freely admitted that she was the shooter. In reply to the journalist's question as to just why she was targeting the school, she replied: "I just started shooting. I just did it for the fun of it. I just don't like Mondays. This livens up the day. Do you like Mondays? I have to go now. I shot a pig [policeman] and want to shoot some more. I'm having too much fun to surrender." McGlinn confirmed that Spencer had written "stories and poems about police and cops" and that "there was some violence in what she wrote" but he insists that the material didn't indicate that Spencer was intent on killing anyone. However, the prosecuting attorney argued in

RIGHT Pupils and parents alike were puzzled as to the reason behind Spencer's shooting spree, questions teachers and staff members were also faced with when the children returned to school



POLICE INBOUND

EMERGENCY SERVICES RESPONDED TO REPORTS OF A SHOOTING AT CLEVELAND ELEMENTARY ONLY TO BECOME VICTIMS THEMSELVES





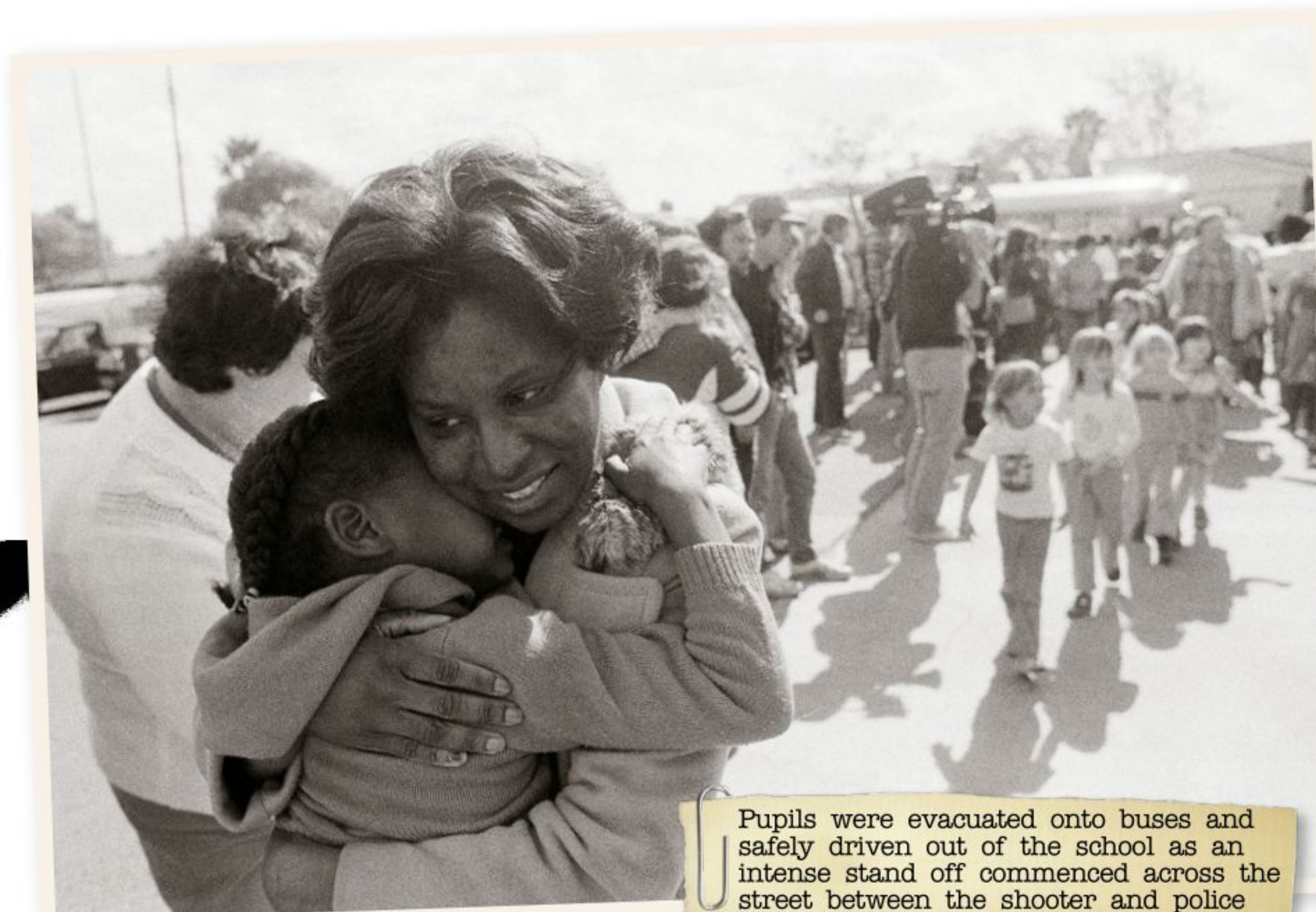
“ WHEN POLICE ARRIVED AT THE SCHOOL GATES, THEY INSPECTED THE DIRECTION OF THE BULLETS, IN A FLASH OFFICER ROBERT ROBB WAS SHOT IN THE NECK ”

court that they had interviewed a friend of Spencer's who had detailed a plot between the two of them to kill a police officer to, “see what that would feel like.”

When police attempted to negotiate with Spencer, she told them that she was armed and was “only going to come out shooting.” For more than six hours an intense standoff between Spencer and the SWAT team ensued as the neighbourhood, and indeed the world, looked on in disbelief. In a turn of events that afternoon, Spencer unlocked her front door, walked out into the street and laid down her rifle – the “fun” and games were over. Finally, the face of San Diego's misery was shown to the crowds and news reporters who had gathered in light of the attack. Spencer appeared a child herself, a little over 1.5 metres tall, skinny and pale. She wore her long, bright hair parted down the middle while large aviator glasses rested on the bridge of her nose.

NOT SO SWEET SIXTEEN

SWAT officer Mike Hendrikson pounced on the now unarmed girl and pinned her to the floor as police made their arrest. Spencer was whisked away from the scene by police, to the San Diego City jail where she was held for questioning. McGlinn, who was tasked with defending Spencer after her arrest, says he was surprised at the seriousness of her crime given her young age. “When I first met her in the juvenile hall in San Diego, it was like she was shell shocked,” he said, describing Spencer as emotionless and in a “disassociated state” when he first spoke with her.



Pupils were evacuated onto buses and safely driven out of the school as an intense stand off commenced across the street between the shooter and police



ABOVE Traumatized children were released to their parents after they were rescued from the sombre sight of their principal and custodian fatally wounded in front of them

“ IN COURT MCGLINN ARGUED THAT THE YOUNG GIRL SUFFERED FROM TEMPORAL LOBE EPILEPSY, A CONDITION THAT HE ARGUED CAUSED HER TO LOSE CONTROL OF HERSELF. ”

That afternoon three children were released from hospital with minor wounds, while another five students were hospitalised with varying degrees of injuries. Two of the young victims, both nine years old, were reported as being in a critical but stable condition following surgery for haemorrhaging stomach wounds.

Spencer's toxicology report showed no traces of drugs or alcohol in her system, although the girl claimed she had been drinking and smoking marijuana that morning. McGlinn discovered that Spencer had been taking pills associated with epileptic seizures and sent her to be evaluated further by doctors and physicians. He sought the help of renowned psychologist Dorothy Otnow Lewis. In court McGlinn argued that the young girl suffered from Temporal Lobe Epilepsy, a condition that he argued caused her to lose control of herself. Spencer entered a plea of not guilty by reason of insanity. “We tried to have her tried at a violent epileptic centre at UCLA,” said McGlinn. “They wouldn't touch her with a ten-foot pole, because when this came out the epileptic community went nuts, they didn't want any association of violence with epilepsy.”

Speaking to McGlinn from his San Diego office, he said, that as per the court's request, Spencer was evaluated by psychiatrists in the west of the country for the prosecution, their findings contradicted those of the first set of evaluations. “The east coast were saying that she was in a ‘disassociated state’ and shouldn't be convicted of first degree murder, whereas the west didn't buy that, and said she had definitely committed murder be it first or second degree.” But McGlinn argued that Spencer's state of mind was a mitigating factor in her actions. “I don't think she had any conception she was shooting human beings who would die, and that their families lives would be devastated by her actions.” For months, Spencer's stone-like state remained and though she opened up to Lewis when she told her she was sharing a bed with her father, she didn't elaborate or suggest that anything sexual had occurred. “Eventually when she came out of her shocked state, she was very sorry for what had occurred,” McGlinn said.

Although Spencer was 16, the law in California at the time required her to be tried as an adult, but she escaped the death penalty. Because of the extensive publicity surrounding



ND FEMALE INTAKE

BRENDA SPENCER



Spencer reportedly enjoyed SWAT programmes on the television and became particularly excited when watching shooting scenes

where she was to remain until being transferred to an adult prison at the age of 25.

TELL ME: WHY?

Cleveland Elementary School closed its doors in 1983, along with a handful of others following a decline in enrolment. Since 2005, the old school building has housed grade six, seven and eight students of the Magnolia Science Academy. A memorial plaque and flagpole placed at the scene commemorates the lives lost on that playground, but for those who actually survived, little is needed to remind them of the trauma they experienced. Almost ten years to the day of the shooting, another school under the same name, took place in Stockton, California. Five schoolchildren died while 30 others were wounded before the gunman, Patrick Purdy, was shot and killed by police.

In 1993, fear spiked again in the victims' hearts as Spencer prepared for her first parole hearing. A 31-year-old Spencer gave what was her first and only interview on television. She told the reporter that a concoction of whiskey, pills and marijuana laced with PCP caused her to hallucinate and that the victims resembled commando men in combat gear. She revealed that she had been trying to get herself killed by the police. "Complete neglect" is how she described growing up in her family home. At her parole hearing she accused state prosecutors and McGlenn of conspiracy to hide her results and alleged that the state authorities had placed her on mind-altering medication both during and after her hearing. She said that she had not realised she was pleading guilty to the charges due to the medication. The parole board took 15 minutes to decide that she was not ready to be released.

In 2001 her demeanour was more remorseful for the events that had taken place in San Carlos, "I know saying I'm sorry doesn't make it alright. I wished it had never happened." Reflecting on her behaviour she told the board: "With every school shooting I feel I'm partially responsible,

what if they got their idea from what I did?" But in the same hearing, the blame game had a new player – her father. Brenda alleged that her violent behaviour had stemmed from a troubled home life where her father beat and sexually abused her, a claim that was met with great scepticism as to why she had failed to mention this for the last 20 years.

Spencer said that her father had sodomised her and performed digital penetration on her as a child and that, although she had expressed her dilemma to counsellors, they had ignored her. However, every Saturday her father travelled to upstate California to visit his daughter, Spencer told the parole board that the pair had "gotten to be friends" over the years. The deputy district attorney pointed out to the board that after a failed prison relationship with another woman, Spencer had used a hot paperclip to 'tattoo' the words 'courage' and 'pride' on her chest, Spencer explained how it actually read 'unforgiven' and 'alone', but, nonetheless, the irrational attempt at self mutilation was regarded as an "inability to deal with stress and an inclination to act out in anger." Parole was denied, as was her latest appeal in 2009. She will not be allowed to apply again for parole until 2019.

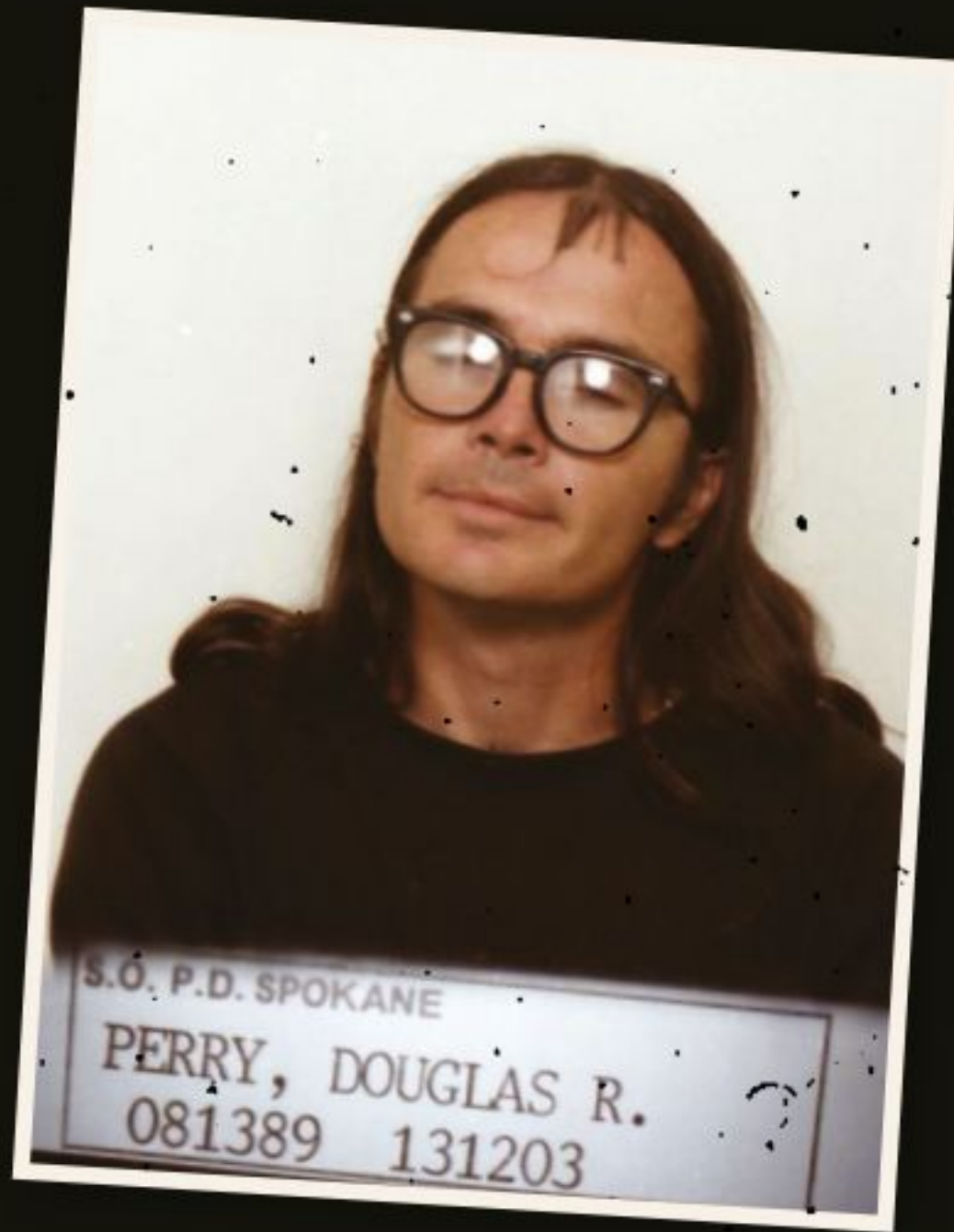
Spencer's crime, McGlenn and the district attorney insisted that the trial was moved to Orange County to ensure a fair trial, striking a deal that Spencer would plead guilty to the murders in return for a chance to be paroled at a later date. In October 1980, 17-year-old Spencer admitted her guilt in two counts of first-degree murder, eight counts of assault with a deadly weapon and one count of an assault on a police officer. A day after her 18th birthday, Spencer stood in front of a Superior Court judge for sentencing. Throughout the ordeal Spencer remained still and silent, only uttering, "yes" when the judge asked her if she understood that she was being sentenced.

The punishment handed down to Spencer was 25 years to life in prison. Her parents, who were in court to support their daughter, let out soft sobs as she was sentenced to prison. Spencer was also given seven years for assault with a deadly weapon on a police officer and six years on each count of assault with a deadly weapon on school children. The judge ordered that her sentences all be served concurrently. She was told that she would be eligible for parole after 16 years and eight months and sent to a Youth Authority facility



ABOVE The cover to the single 'I Don't Like Mondays' by Irish band The Boomtown Rats. The band's second number one single, it was inspired by the Cleveland Elementary School shooting





DONNA'S DOUBLE LIFE?

THE GREY-HAIRED WOMAN IN THE DOCK SAID NOT A WORD AT THE SEX-WORKERS' MURDER TRIAL. DID SHE REMEMBER DOUG'S DEADLY DEEDS?

WORDS BY CHARLIE OUGHTON



BIO DONNA PERRY

DEMURE GRANDMA?

Donna Perry's supposedly less violent lifestyle after her gender reassignment surgery as a 60-year-old woman included frequent shopping for weaponry and ammunition she had been banned from owning.

BIO DOUGLAS PERRY



ALLEGED HIT MAN

No stranger to the wrong side of the law, prior to transition Perry had told local sex workers he was a contract killer. He had a history of misdemeanours and confessed a career in the illegal arms trade to a cellmate.

The Spokane river runs through northern Idaho and Eastern Washington. It slinks through Spokane city and clatters cold around its valley. Lying in its wake were the bodies of three women. Found in 1990, they were sex workers. It took 27 years and until July 2017 for their killer to be brought before justice. In the intervening period, defendant Donna Perry (who was no stranger to a rap sheet) had undergone gender reassignment surgery after being named Douglas Perry at birth, but identifying as a woman. Donna outright denied the murders and then claimed that she had gender reassignment surgery to distance herself from the mayhem. Why did she do it?

Douglas Perry was a criminal, and not a particularly petty one either. He had convictions for reckless endangerment in 1987 and possession of a pipe bomb in 1988. Guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition were found at his home, leading to further arrests in 1994. The latter wouldn't have seemed strange in the United States, barring the fact that he had already been banned from owning arms as a result of his previous misdemeanours.

THREE DEAD LADIES

Police in Spokane didn't know the half of it at that point, unfortunately. Like any average city or town in just about any country in the world, there are people whose circumstances or personal choice leads them to make their living through sex work. It's not to everyone's taste, but it means they can provide for themselves and their families.

Yolanda Sapp was 26 years old when her naked body was found on the 22nd February 1990. It was half way down a steep river incline in the 4100 block of East Upriver Drive, Spokane. A green blanket was wrapped around the feet; the chest bore the marks from a small gun. Yolanda's boyfriend later told Detective Nick Stanley that the last thing she told him was that she needed to earn money from her sex work.

Nickie Lowe's body joined Yolanda's resting place just under a month later, on the 25th March. Nickie was 34 years old, was a drug user and was found underneath the Greene Street Bridge. The body had been draped over a rail.

Kathleen Brisbois' corpse was the final, terrible discovery on 15th May, a month and a half later. The 38-year old was found near Trent Avenue and Pines Road, to the west side of the water. A feisty character, blood found underneath her fingernails showed she had defended herself when attacked. A police report noted that "drops of blood and clumps of hair that covered dozens of feet" were found in the immediate vicinity of the body, which had gunshot wounds, three broken ribs and skull fractures. "She fought the fight of her life," as her eldest daughter, Kaishea Kegley, would declare years later.

DNA AND DOUBT

DNA evidence was unfortunately in its infancy at the time of the murders in 1990. Officers were assigned to the case and evidence, such as a white floral blanket found near Yolanda Sapp and the fingerprints found on a pot of sexual lubricant



“ THERE WERE POTENTIAL SUSPECTS SUCH AS SPOKANE SERIAL KILLER ROBERT YATES, BUT HE WAS IN GERMANY ON MILITARY SERVICE ”

located near Nickie Lowe, were collected and catalogued, but things began to grind to a halt. There were potential suspects such as Spokane serial killer Robert Yates, but he was in Germany on military service at the time of the murders. The case went cold. The women's families tried to mourn, but they never gave up hope.

Remember that the eyes of the law can be in the most inconspicuous of places, though. Donna Perry, an older lady, was doing what for many is not an unusual shopping chore when a retired detective spotted her at his local store years later in 2012. She'd selected some ammunition and was buying a pistol magazine when, despite the intervening years, the detective remembered her face and the connection to long ago weapons felonies. He took a photo of her car as she drove off and sent it in for investigation. His recollection paid off and a search of her Empire Avenue home revealed a dozen more guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition. Aside from the sheer volume of potentially carnage-causing cargo in the seemingly unassuming woman's home, the detectives' interest was piqued by flashbacks to a previous raid they had completed on one Douglas Perry's property, and which had uncovered a 1969 International Scout firearm. It held .22 calibre bullets... just like the model that had been

used in the sex-worker slayings all those years previously. To make matters even more disturbing, officers also found a hidden door that had been painted over. Inside was women's underwear that was too small for Perry. Fetishising frilly knickers isn't a crime, but the find seemed all too similar to the trophies serial killers keep.

DNA had also geared up to catch the killer. By 2009 law enforcement's persistence was rewarded as developments in DNA profiling meant that the evidence from the sex-killer case that had been submitted in a 2005 review could be re-examined. A profile was developed and a match found in 2012, just around the time Donna Perry was getting double-takes from the old detective. The profile on Perry's rediscovered bullets matched the gun that shot the sex worker, the lubricant bottle that had been used to penetrate Nickie Lowe and the blanket that had been put around Yolanda Sapp. The blood under the fighting escort's nails fingered the woman who was right then in custody for gun charges. However, while this may appear cast-iron evidence, Perry's defence lawyer, Pat Donahue, pointed out that these could have come from the uncontested fact that Perry had paid for sex from the women when she was presenting herself as a man.



ABOVE (From top to bottom) Kathleen Brisbois, Yolanda Sapp and Nicki Lowe all died from gunshot wounds inflicted by Perry

DENIAL, DOUG AND DONNA

Evidence placed both Perry's pistol and her DNA at the scene of all three crimes, but the case was not without controversy.

She repeatedly denied any guilt for four hours when she was interviewed by detectives, but then something had changed: she had undergone gender reassignment surgery in the year 2000. Perry had been assigned male at birth, but identified as female. She had undergone hormone replacement therapy and travelled to Thailand for surgery to give herself a female appearance and had renamed herself Donna. Considering the time gap and the link between the crimes, interviewing Detective Mark Burbridge raised the idea that perhaps 'Douglas Perry', the name and presumably the identity she had legally held before her transition, had committed the crimes?

'Doug' complicated matters. Perry started to change her story. At one point she distanced herself from her past, saying "I don't know if Doug did [the crimes] or not. It was 20 years ago and I have no idea whether he did or didn't." Talking to the police about 'Doug' and using the name rather than the word 'I' suggests she was indicating that she thought of 'Doug' as another person, rather than herself as a younger adult. There may even have been the suggestion of schizophrenia and that 'Doug' was another of her personae. Donna emphasised the point in an affidavit about the murders dated January 2014: "Douglas didn't stop. Donna stopped it", and further still "I'm not going to admit I killed anybody, I didn't. Douglas has killed nobody." In fairness, the pattern of behaviour was unusual. While serial killers do have 'cooling off' periods during which they refrain from murder, it is rare for them to stop killing completely, as Perry seems to have done. Maybe there was some truth to her claims after all?

Two witnesses contradicted this version of events. The first was Chero Fread, Perry's former cellmate. According to Fread, Perry had told her "becoming a woman was a disguise to take the heat off of him, that an elderly lady with mental illness would never get caught." This suggested Perry was very aware of shifting identity to evade the law. Furthermore, while having significant surgery is a way to alter others' perceptions of you, other things didn't add up. Perry told Fread that she, Perry, had killed the woman because "because she couldn't breed and the women had the ability to have children and they were wasting it being 'pond scum'". Claiming to have killed because of jealousy at being unable to mother children does at least sound like an internalisation of female gender identity.

However, Fread's further evidence cast some doubt on her own claims of conversations with Perry as they became increasingly outlandish, as she asserted: "I would say the focus was recruiting me or turning me into a killer." Fread completed her comments on the subject of Perry's supposed admission of guilt by saying "He wasn't done killing" and was using the transition as "a disguise" that would enable her (as Donna) to "be capable of hurting or killing other people." Unfortunately for Fread, the more dramatic her claims, the more her truthfulness as a witness was questioned.

The second witness did not have this problem. Charlotte Nagrone met Perry when Nagrone was working at the Department of Social and Health Services. She claimed that Perry had told her "things had gotten wild and out of control" and that she, Donna, "was going to end up dead or in prison" so "got gelded just like a horse and got [her] life back under control." In this version of events, Perry had the gender



ABOVE The Spokane County Courthouse towers looms over the city that Perry devastated

reassignment surgery not because her gender identity was female, or particularly to evade justice as Fread sometimes claimed, but because she thought the removal of her male genitals and the concurrent removal of the testosterone supply would keep her out of further trouble by making her more womanly – and supposedly passive. The truth of the matter is frankly impossible to gauge. Even if the gender reassignment surgery did help her alter her ways, she still has to face justice.

COURT AND CONDOLENCES

The jury deliberated for four weeks until the 24th July. They found Perry guilty of the three murders. The outlook for her was even more dire considering they also decided the circumstances were aggravated because the murders were part of a plan, rather than random acts. This meant that Perry was eligible for a life sentence per charge.

Supreme Court Judge Michael Price was under no illusions. Perry was given three life sentences without parole. Price summed the case up by saying, "This is my first case, and hopefully my last, where the murders seemingly were committed for the sport of it and for no other reason".

“WHILE SERIAL KILLERS DO HAVE ‘COOLING OFF’ PERIODS, IT IS RARE FOR THEM TO STOP KILLING COMPLETELY”

DIAGNOSIS MURDER?

WAS PERRY'S MURDER SPREE A RESULT OF BEING TRANSGENDER? PSYCHOLOGISTS INCLUDING COURT EXPERT DR JACK DRESCHER WEIGH IN

Dr Jack Drescher was asked by court to comment on Donna Perry's crimes because he contributed to the development of the fifth *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, known as the *DSM-V*. The manual describes symptoms to enable doctors to diagnose patients' mental health issues. However, as academics such as Paula J Caplan have noted in her article "They say you're crazy: How the world's most powerful psychiatrists decide who's normal", the experiences the *Manual* classifies as 'disease' can be argued as reflecting what the people who wrote the *Manual* think of as mental illness, rather than being proof of something fundamentally 'wrong' in the body.

At the time of writing, gender dysphoria is considered to be a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. Key symptoms include 'a strong desire to be treated as the other gender'. This is not to say that transgender people see themselves as different people before any treatment they may have.

As Dr Drescher explains, when transgender people say they were 'different people' before, it is "a certain way that they use the metaphor when transitioning for those who were very unhappy before and now are happy." In this sense, their low mood prior to transition and way they tried to fit in with society before they transitioned can make them seem like a different personality, and look different to people while actually knowing they are the same person.

Luckily for the law, the implications of Perry's claims that Doug and Donna were two separate people are not drastic. As Drescher says "It's different when a person makes a claim that somehow they have no linkage to the person they used to be. That would be more of a disturbed presentation." If a suspect thought they had no connection to their previous, non-transgender identity, they would either be lying or have a 'disturbed presentation' of another form of mental health issue that could be diagnosed, so that they could be brought to justice regardless.

Of the woman whose lives were cut short, "They didn't work the streets because they wanted to," Price said. "They were hostages to addiction. All three of them were trapped. They were all courageous. They were all caring. They were all loving." They had people who had loved them, too. It was a relief for those left behind. At the close of the trial, Kaishea Kegley, daughter of Brisbois said "I lost the person who loved me the most in this world". She went on, "I'm truly honored and humbled to be here. I never thought this day was going to come." Chilesa Patzer, victim Nickie Lowe's niece, had a similarly positive reaction, stating: "I'm absolutely blown away. I am so excited that we got guilty on all three counts, for all three of these women. It's been my entire life for this whole entire case, 27 years." Chilesa can, now that she has some closure, move on.

In his final closing comments, Judge Price thanked Perry for the "dignity" she had shown throughout the trial. She had spoken only to confirm her name and date of birth and had otherwise jotted notes as others argued about her identity. As she now says that she identifies as female, we must assume that she is transgender, rather than pretending to be to evade justice. Discussing her past is important for future cases. Perry made it a feature of her trial by talking about 'Doug' as someone else. Being transgender did not make her a killer. She is a killer because she chose to be one.

Yolanda Sapp, Nickie Lowe and Kathy Brisbois' murderer is behind bars and justice, as far as is possible, has been done. It has now been a full twenty-seven years after the killings took place.

ABOVE A fingerprint found on a pot of sexual lubricant became an important piece of evidence





THE JEALOUS RAGE OF JODI ARIAS

TRAVELLING 1,000 MILES FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE IS THE STUFF OF SONGS, BUT FOR TRAVIS ALEXANDER, JODI ARIAS'S SECRET TRIP WOULD BECOME HIS WORST NIGHTMARE

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

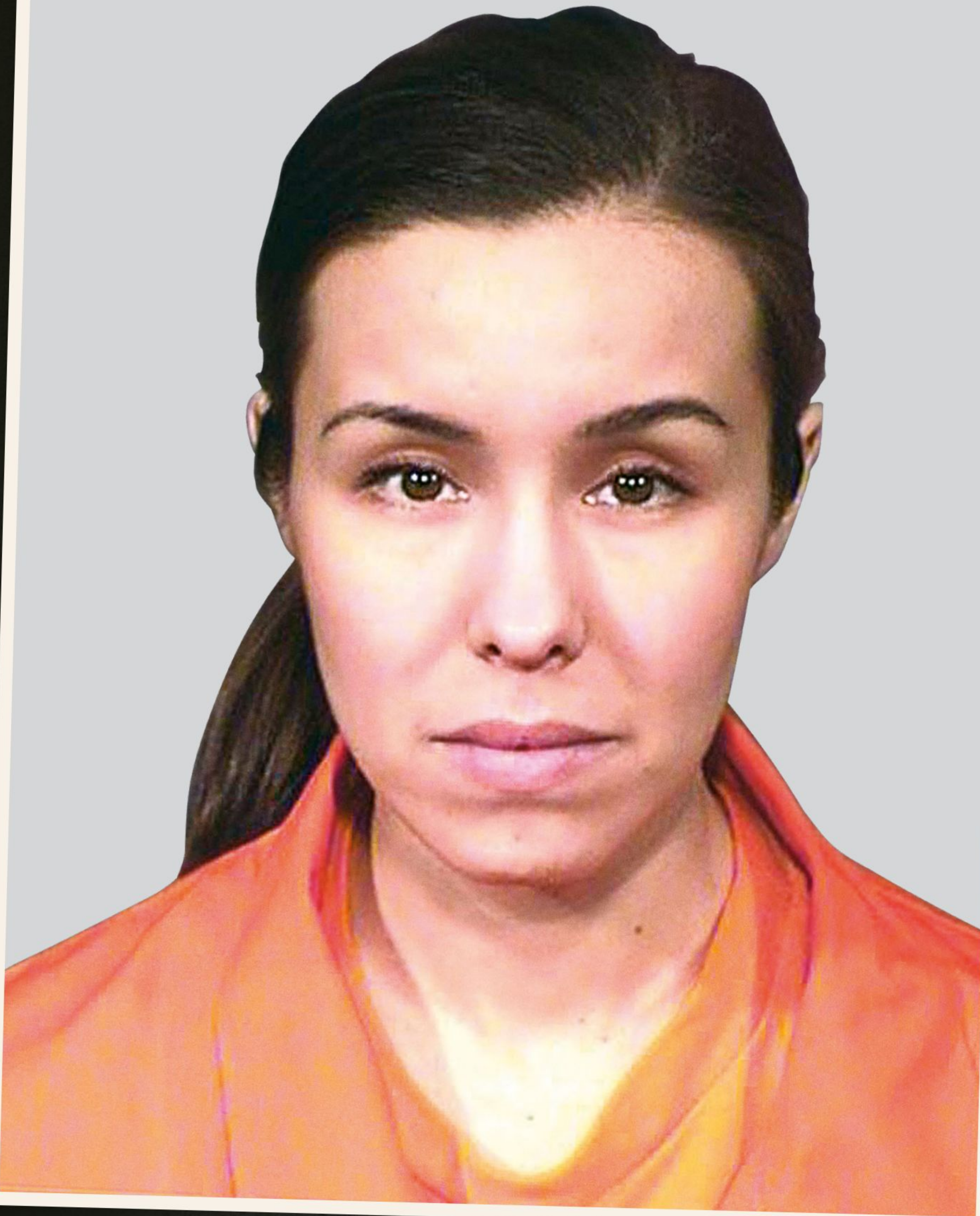
As the old adage goes, “hell hath no fury like a woman scorned,” and 30 year-old Travis Alexander, a motivational speaker and legal salesman from Arizona, learned that lesson the hard way. As his killer and ex-girlfriend Jodi Arias stood over his bloody body in his Mesa home, he finally succumbed to her boiling rage. He had tried to fight back against her stabbing frenzy, but when she slit his throat ear to ear, he lost consciousness almost immediately. The stab wounds were, as the prosecution would later argue, not immediately fatal, but the slash to his neck was so fierce that it severed his voice box and a main artery, nearly decapitating him. But Arias wasn't finished – she then put a bullet through his right temple.

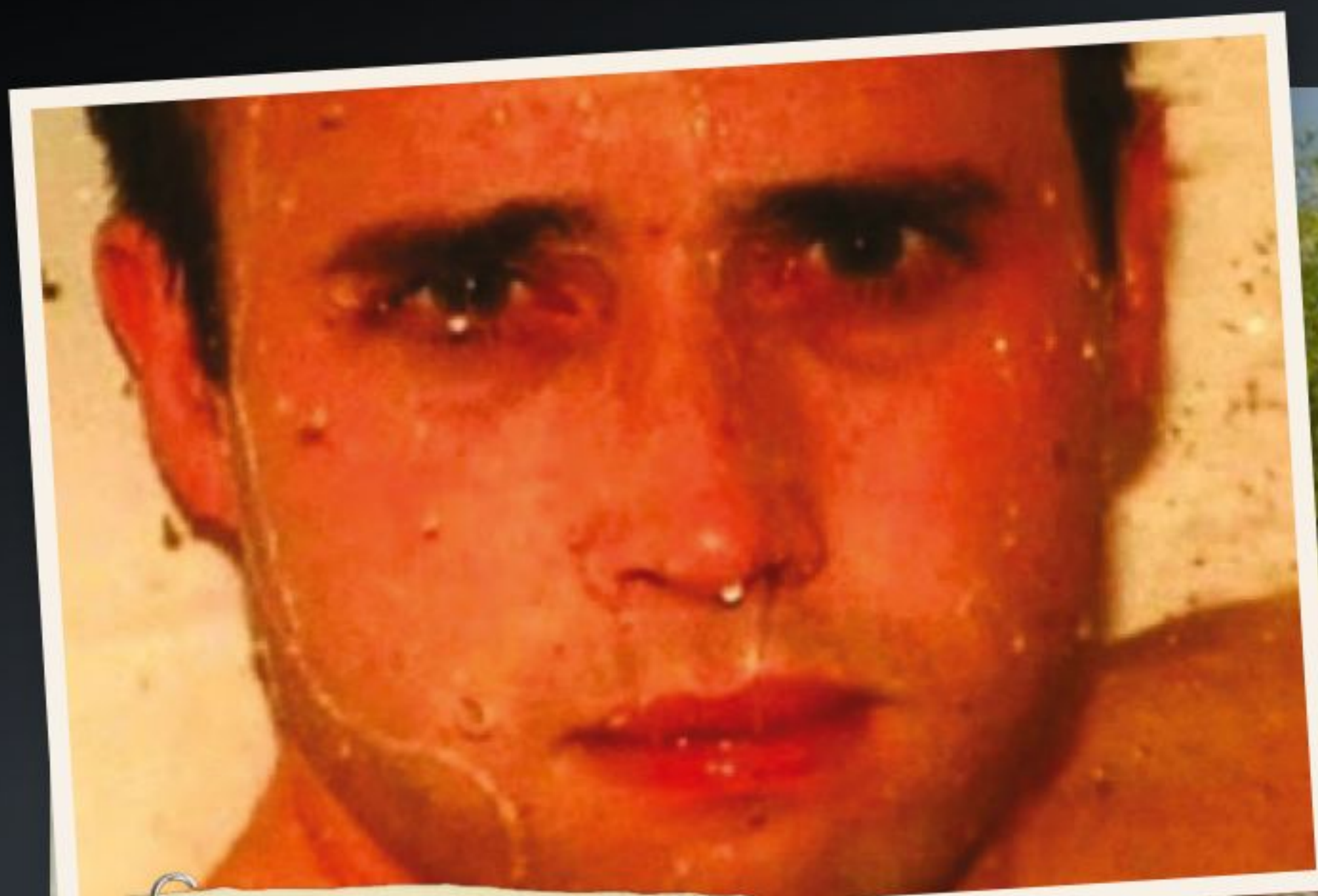
Inside Alexander's home, a grim murder scene had been left behind. Blood stained the bathroom tiles and the veneer of the sink, it drenched the carpet outside the room where his body lay crumpled and decomposing in a shower stall,

waiting to be discovered. On the wall outside, a bloody palm print showed signs of a struggle. Arias, however, had fled to Utah to pursue another “potential love interest”, a man who had no idea that hours earlier she had murdered someone. How was he to know? Arias had gone to the “extreme”, according to prosecutor Juan Martinez, to cover her tracks and had then tried to carry on as normal. But soon she would be caught like a deer in headlights as every detail of her 2,000-mile round trip was revealed to a jury, in an attempt to prove that Arias had planned Alexander's brutal slaying.

OBSESSED

When Arias was arrested in connection with Alexander's murder on 15 July 2008, days after her 29th birthday, it didn't take the investigating officer, Detective Esteban Flores, long to establish that a journey she had made between 2 and 7





The last photograph of Travis Alexander was taken of him in the shower in the same bathroom where he was found dead



June 2008 to Utah did not make sense. She had racked up thousands of miles in a journey that should have taken only a few hundred. She told officers that she had gone to Salt Lake City to attend a business seminar with Ryan Burns and had found herself lost on the way. At the murderer's trial, Burns testified under oath that when Arias had showed up at his home on 5 June, "She was fine... she was laughing about simple little things like any other person. I never once felt like anything was wrong during the day." But when Alexander's body was discovered four days later, the police began gathering information from his friends and family. For the most part, they all directed their suspicions towards Alexander's "stalker" ex-girlfriend, Arias, who by now was more than 1,000 miles away in Yreka, California.

They had met at a conference in Las Vegas in September 2006. Although Alexander had decided against marrying young and was known as a bit of a ladies' man among his friends, the bachelor life was beginning to wear thin for him. After their first meeting, he and Arias, an independent photographer and saleswoman, spoke on the phone every day and made an instant connection. So strong was their bond that Arias asked Alexander to baptise her into his religion, the Mormon church, a few months later, and the pair began dating in February the following year. Their shared faith brought them closer together, but also caused conflict due to their repeated sin of having intercourse before marriage.

Five months later, Arias went through her boyfriend's phone and discovered flirtatious messages between him

and other women. Trust broken on both sides, they decided to call time on their relationship. Although the decision to part ways had been mutual, Arias moved to Arizona from California and the pair, despite being broken up, were still involved sexually and continued to see each other casually. But by December, Alexander was prepared to move on and begin dating again. At this time in his life, he had decided that he wanted to settle down, just not with Arias.

Instead, he confessed to her he was drawn towards another girl, Marie 'Mimi' Hall, a girl within his religious group. This revelation angered Arias, who had previously displayed volatile behaviour by slashing Alexander's tyres twice and sending his former girlfriend ominous and intimidating e-mails. "Obsessed" was the word a lot of Alexander's friends used to describe her. "She wanted to make herself a bride," Martinez told **Real Crime** of the crazed ex-lover, "and Travis wasn't particularly going with that." Unfortunately for Alexander, Hall did not share his feelings. She insisted that their relationship remain platonic. Still eager to spend time with her, Alexander booked to take her on a trip to Texas on 10 June 2008 – a trip he had originally planned to take with Arias.

Arias told Detective Flores that she had not seen Alexander since April and that had been the last time they had sex, around the time she had moved back to California. She told him she had spoken with Alexander the day before he died while travelling to Utah to see Burns and that Alexander was, "Nice and cordial, but kind of acting like

ABOVE Alexander's home, in which he was brutally murdered by his ex-girlfriend

“IF SHE WASN'T THE ONE FOR HIM THEN THAT WAS THE END OF THE ROAD FOR HIM. SHE WAS COMING FOR HIM WITH THE GOAL TO KILL HIM”

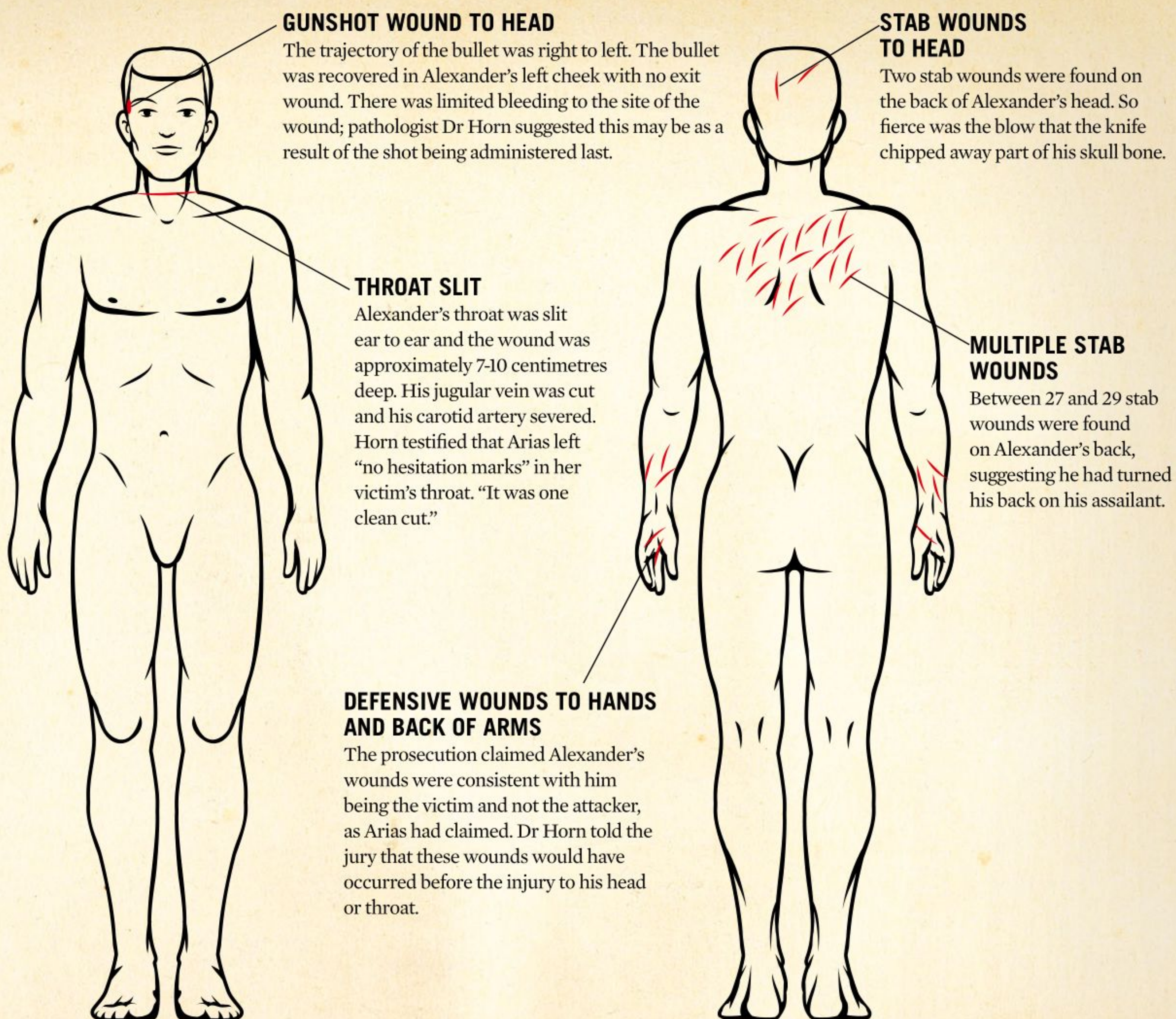


While Arias teared up, hundreds of spectators cheered outside the court when she was found guilty of first-degree murder by a jury of eight men and four women

STABBED, SLICED & SHOT

ALEXANDER'S BODY SHOWED THE JURORS THE STRENGTH OF ARIAS, WHO CLAIMED SHE "WOULDN'T EVEN HURT SPIDERS"

On the third day of the murder trial in Phoenix, Arizona, Dr Kevin Horn, of the Maricopa County Medical Examiner's office, testified on the nature of Alexander's death. While Horn talked through the injuries, a number of gruesome and detailed photographs were shown in court of the deceased's battered body. According to Horn, due to the state of decomposition, it was difficult for the office to determine whether Alexander was dead or not when Arias administered the shot to his skull, but Horn argued that the gunshot wound had been Arias's final attack on her victim. The cause of death was excessive blood loss from the victim's body.



A TRAIL OF LIES

TRAVELLING THOUSANDS OF MILES, ARIAS ATTEMPTED TO COVER HER TRACKS, BUT INSTEAD SHE LEFT CLUES AT EVERY TURN



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In what turned out to be damning evidence, Jodi insisted she had returned the third gas can to Walmart, but it was proven that she

80

he had hurt feelings.” Flores, not believing her story, made comments about how her phone had been turned off in Las Vegas and was not switched back on again until Arias was well into Alexander’s home state of Arizona. Still, Arias claimed that she had not gone to see Alexander despite 18 hours of her trip to Utah being unaccounted for, even after she recounted two separate occasions where she pulled over to sleep, a breakdown, and an excuse of having been completely lost. But Flores told her that they had pictures proving her alibi to be false.

Photographs recovered from a waterlogged camera found in Alexander’s washing machine at the crime scene were dated and time stamped to the moments in which Alexander had been killed. They showed Arias naked on the bed and Alexander naked in the shower. Still Arias insisted she didn’t kill Alexander and that she wasn’t there on that day. Instead she asked coyly: “Are you sure those pictures weren’t from another time?” Unknown to Arias, another picture showed her dragging Alexander’s bloody corpse across the floor.

Closing in on her further, the investigating officer gave her three separate DNA samples that proved she had been there: a strand of hair with the follicle still present, her blood mixed with Alexander’s and her palm print all within metres of Alexander’s body. Flores dismissed every excuse and every argument Arias made to dispute the undisputable: “There’s no evidence to show that anyone else did this but you,” Flores told her. After a month of being questioned by police, Arias changed her story. She admitted she had been there, providing a lavish account of two intruders who killed Alexander and threatened her family if she spoke up. She stuck to this story for the next two years before admitting to killing Alexander in self-defence in 2010 as she awaited her trial, which began on 2 January 2013.

FUELLING THE FIRE

In a packed courtroom, in front of Alexander’s and Arias’s family in Maricopa County Superior Court, prosecutor Martinez gave his opening speech. Describing Arias, who had once called the victim a “blessing in her life”, he said: “She rewarded that love of Travis Victor Alexander by sticking a knife in his chest. And you know he was a good man according to her, and with regards to being a good man? Well she slit his throat as a reward for being a good man. And in terms of these blessings? Well she knocked the blessings out of him by putting a bullet in his head.” Martinez intended to prove to the jury that Arias had planned this murder. “In her mind,” he told **Real Crime**, “if she wasn’t the one for him then that was the end of the road for him. She was coming for him with the goal to kill him.”

Just a week before her trip, Arias’s grandparents had reported a burglary at their home in Yreka, California, where Arias had been living at the time. A number of things had been stolen including a 25-calibre gun owned by her grandfather, the same calibre of gun that had been used to shoot Alexander. A bullet casing was found at the scene but the gun was never recovered. Arias later admitted she had thrown it out into the desert as she fled. The knife used to stab and slash the victim to death has also never been recovered. Martinez focused on detailing Arias’s careful planning and consideration before her trip to Utah. She had rented a car from Budget Rent A Car in Redding, California, approximately two hours south of Yreka. There were car rental branches in her hometown, so why travel so far for the sake of renting a vehicle? Arias claimed it was because



when she sought out a Budget Rent A Car, she was given two options, one in the north and one in the south. Seeing as her brother lived in the south, she opted to head towards Redding to collect a car. The trip between California and Utah was only about 750 miles, yet when she returned the car on 7 June, she had racked up almost four times that distance.

During an interview with police, Arias’s mother said that when she spoke with her daughter about Alexander’s murder, Arias told her she had receipts to prove that she was nowhere near Arizona that day. What the prosecution found instead was a receipt from a Walmart store in Salinas that showed that she had bought a five-gallon gas canister on 2 June. Totting up the miles, Martinez realised that with two other gas canisters she had earlier admitted to taking on the trip, she would have enough petrol to make it to Arizona without stopping at a gas station.

The prosecution claimed that Arias had planned the trip to see Alexander and had tried to cover her tracks, avoiding petrol stations and filling her fuel tank up with the five-gallon cans she took with her.

However, the defence counterclaimed that Arias always took gas cans with her on long trips, particularly those that required her to travel through the desert, and that she had borrowed two from an ex-partner and then purchased the third at a Walmart in Salinas. However, after considering her

ABOVE Arizona allows jurors to pose questions to those who take to the stand and during her 18 days of testimony, the jury asked the murderer more than 100

“ THE DEFENCE PORTRAYED ARIAS AS A BROKEN WOMAN, BATTERED AND ABUSED BY ALEXANDER ”

route, she decided the third gas canister was not necessary and returned it that day, only taking two on the trip.

Throughout the prosecution's allegations of premeditated murder, the defence portrayed Arias as a broken woman, battered and abused by Alexander. Alyce LaViolette, an expert in domestic abuse, dissected a 16-page message Alexander sent to Arias in which he threatened her, compared her to Adolf Hitler, the devil and a prostitute, and sexually berated her. LaViolette also listed the number of women Alexander had exchanged flirtatious and sexually explicit messages with during the time he was involved in sexual liaisons with Arias. Arias declared that on the day of his death, Arias had dropped Alexander's expensive camera while they were in the bathroom and that he had snapped, charging at her like "a line-backer" and knocking her to the ground. She then shot him and fought for her life. She failed to call 911 because she "couldn't imagine" telling anyone what she had done.

ZOOMING IN ON ARIAS

Arias's memory threw up some issues during the trial. She was on the stand for a total of 18 days, commencing on 4 February 2013. Throughout her testimony, she claimed that her mind had been a "fog" following what had happened during the attack on Alexander on 4 June 2008. But Martinez tore into Arias time and time again, presenting facts that proved she had premeditated the visit. "I don't know anyone who goes for a sexual encounter with an ex-boyfriend or an ex-partner and takes a gun or a knife," Martinez said.

Addressing the jury, Martinez revealed that Arias had rented a car from a company 90 miles away from her hometown. When the company gave her a red car, she disapproved, demanding a white one so that it would not draw too much attention to her. When Arias had showed up to rent the car, she had bottle blonde hair. However, in the pictures taken before and during Alexander's death, it had changed to a deep brown, something that also surprised Burns as he had only seen Arias once before she changed her hair colour. Arias had been stopped in Utah because police noticed that the front licence plate had been removed, the rear plate had been inverted and was unreadable. None of these things were coincidence, he claimed that they were not sporadic acts but all part of a ploy to fool everyone into believing she was not the killer.

All of these things might have been explained away by Arias, who in the courtroom was the master of elusion. "I don't know" was one of her favourite phrases when asked to recall certain damning information. But Martinez knew that the maths and figures did not lie. "I waited for the opportunity to present this evidence and that time was when she was on the witness stand," he told **Real Crime**. Arias adamantly claimed that she had returned the third gas canister she had purchased from the Walmart in Salinas. But when store employee Amanda Webb took the stand under oath, she contradicted Arias's account. Webb had worked at the store for two years and her role was to investigate internal theft and reports. The employee had an extensive knowledge of the procedure for a customer to return an item. She explained that if Arias had returned the item, then she would have been issued a receipt detailing her refund with the item returned crossed out or circled and the initials of the employee next to the item. All the registers operating on that day were examined by Webb, looking at all the returns made on 2 June. The till registers at the Salinas store also had no



reference to Arias returning the gas canister and the receipt recovered showed no alterations made to suggest otherwise.

Another receipt recovered along with a bank statement from Arias's account showed three transactions on the morning that she left Utah to travel home. At a Tesoro gas station, Arias put approximately ten gallons of fuel in the car she was travelling in. At the same station, she filled up again. The receipt and her bank statement showed that she had purchased \$36.98 worth of fuel, equating to 9.83 gallons. A third transaction showed \$19.65, the amount divided by the price of the petrol shows that Arias bought a little more than five gallons of petrol, enough for a third gas can despite her claims that she had only brought two with her on her journey. However, the defence disputed the third expense, as there was no definitive proof that it had been gas.

LIFTING THE FOG

By this point, the jury had come to realise just how easily Arias could lie. Shortly before Martinez's evidence of the third gas canister, the jurors had directed questions at Arias, something that the state permits during a trial. One juror asked that as she had lied before, why should the jury continue to trust her? During the prosecution's damning backlash against Arias, she had no choice but to sit on the

ABOVE Before being charged with Alexander's murder, Jodi sobbed during interrogation when asked about what had happened to her former lover (top). However, just 15 minutes later, after being left alone, Arias exhibited bizarre behaviour including singing, talking to herself and doing a headstand

“ONE JUROR ASKED THAT AS SHE HAD LIED BEFORE, WHY SHOULD THE JURY CONTINUE TO TRUST HER?”



witness stand and watch as her past purchases were detailed in front of her. In his closing argument made to the jury on day 55 of the murder trial, Martinez addressed the jurors and spoke of all the evidence that they had seen in regards to Arias's capability to commit this crime. He gave one final request to the jurors, reminding them that to disregard the gas canister evidence would mean they had symbolically helped her fill the cans and carry them to her car, so that she might continue on her journey to murder Alexander. He implored them to "not leave this courtroom with the stench of gasoline on your hands."

The next day, after only 15 hours of deliberation, the jury delivered a guilty verdict of murder in the first degree. During her final moments in court as she addressed the judge, Arias made another shocking revelation: "I do remember the moment the knife went into Travis's throat and he was conscious. He was still trying to attack me. It was I who was trying to get away, not Travis, and I finally did. I never meant it to be that way, judge." Following her 2013 trial there was an intense legal battle to determine whether Arias would receive the death penalty. At first Arias claimed that to be given the death penalty would mean she was given her freedom and therefore urged the jury to have her executed. However, in another dramatic turn of events, she pleaded to the judge to give her life over death, worrying about the consequences for her family if she were to be executed. After two hung juries, Arias was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole. The killer who was dubbed by her victim in his final days as a "sociopath" and "the worst thing that ever happened to me" will spend the rest of her days in Arizona's Perryville Prison.

ABOVE Five jurors voted Arias was guilty of premeditated murder and seven voted that she was guilty of premeditated felony murder

"I WAS ABLE TO EXPOSE HER"

FIREBRAND PROSECUTOR JUAN MARTINEZ SPOKE TO REAL CRIME ABOUT HIS IMPASSIONED CASE AGAINST ARIAS, HIS DOGGED PURSUIT OF THE TRUTH THROUGH HER WEB OF DECEIT AND THE MEDIA CIRCUS THAT WAS THE 2013 TRIAL

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE TRIAL OF JODI ARIAS?

I would describe it as long: we started taking the jury in December and the verdict came in May – it took months. The way it started out, she claimed that she acted in self-defence. Actually it was a very difficult case because, with the individuals involved, one of them is dead and in this instance, [self-defence] is very difficult for me to dispute. She comes across as very believable.

YOU FOUND EVIDENCE THAT SHE DID NOT RETURN THE THIRD GAS CAN TO WALMART, HOW SIGNIFICANT WAS THAT TO PROVING HER GUILT?

That was the defining moment because there was no way she could say that she hadn't planned to go to Mesa, and all this proved she had gone there. My goal was to surprise her with the evidence that I had, that she had bought a five-gallon gas canister and in fact managed to drive to Arizona without having to stop for gas. And also that she had taken the gun and the knife with her.

HOW FAR DID ARIAS GO TO HIDE THE TRUTH ABOUT HER JOURNEY TO MESA?

She went to the extreme. She went as far as she could. She said, "No I didn't have the gas canister, no the gas canisters weren't for the purpose of going there to kill him." There was all of this information out there, some of it helped her but most of it hurt her because I was able to prove that she was telling lies instead of being truthful. I'm not saying that I admire her, but this was very much a thinking person's crime and she thought it out well.

DO YOU FEEL THAT THIS EVIDENCE WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THE TRIAL WHEN IT CAME TO CONVINCING THE JURY?

The most important part of the evidence was when she took the witness stand and I was able to cross-examine her and question her. I was able to expose her. I was able to say that she had planned it and the jury was able to see her for the person she was. She was forced into taking the witness stand because I had the camera and the camera showed that she was there that day. I don't know why she didn't take the camera – that mistake was how we got onto her and the reason she had to take the witness stand and admit that she was there.

Juan Martinez's book *Conviction: The Untold Story Of Putting Jodi Arias Behind Bars*, is available to buy from harpercollins.co.uk

BIO JUAN MARTINEZ



DEPUTY MARICOPA COUNTY ATTORNEY

Juan Martinez has worked with the Maricopa office for more than 27 years, and has spent that last 20 years successfully prosecuting a number of high-profile criminals in Arizona.

WOMEN WHO KILL

Police tape cordoned off the property of John Price where police made one of the most gruesome discoveries in Australian crime history



On her apprehension, Knight pleaded not guilty to the murder and her lawyers prepared to defend her by saying she was insane. However, she changed her plea to guilty before trial could begin

STABBED, SKINNED & SERVED

KATHERINE KNIGHT DISHED UP REVENGE IN THE MOST HORRIFIC WAY IMAGINABLE: THE ABATTOIR WORKER WITH A FASCINATION FOR KNIVES SLAUGHTERED HER BOYFRIEND AND COOKED HIS BODY PARTS FOR A SICKENING STEW

WORDS EMILY WEBB

Katherine Mary Knight was handy with a knife. It stood to reason that she would be. Born in 1955 in the country town of Aberdeen, New South Wales, Knight, a twin, was the daughter of an abattoir worker. Her upbringing was untamed – living with six brothers and twin sister under the same roof as her violent, alcoholic father and abused mother, knight's formative years were not happy ones.

The big employer in the town was the Aberdeen Meat Works, and in 1974, when Knight was 16, she left school to work there alongside her father. Bespectacled, tall and with red hair, knight was plain and not particularly intelligent. But she soon learned the tricks of the trade in slaughtering animals and found the sense of belonging she never could at school. Co-workers recalled young Kathy took more than a professional interest in the working of the abattoir. She seemed to enjoy working with knives and was mesmerised by the sight of slaughter.

BLACK KNIGHT

Knight met her first husband David Kellett at the slaughterhouse and they married in 1974. Work gave her an escape from her home and so did her youthful marriage to David. While she looked quite mild, Knight had a wild temper and was unpredictable. Even Knight's mother was wary of her daughter and decided to warn the young man.

"Just after we were married, she said to me, 'You want to watch this one, if you do the wrong thing by her she will kill you'," Kellett recalled in a later interview. But David was young and brushed off the warning, hoping for the best for his fledgling marriage.

In the beginning he said Knight was the "perfect mother, perfect housewife". The couple had two children in the late 1970s. But the domestic idyll would be turned upside down with Katherine's moods. "She'd snap, just like a biscuit," Kellett recalled in the *Killer Women* programme.

"It wouldn't take much to set her off," Kellett recalled that the knife set she'd use to slaughter animals would be painstakingly sharpened and washed, and above their marital bed. She was obsessed with knives.

There was never a shortage of men in her life. Knight would go on to have four children to three different fathers. "She was very ordinary looking," journalist and author of *Blood Stain* (a book about Knight's life) Peter Lalor told the programme *Killer Women*. "She knew how to keep a bloke and she was manipulative like that," Lalor added.

After her first husband fled the marriage, Knight took up with a man called David Saunders and the pair had a daughter in 1988. This relationship went the same way as her first marriage. She accused Saunders of sleeping with other women and in a rage cut all his clothing into small pieces. Once, when her first husband had been late home from a pub darts competition, she smashed him on the back of the head with an iron and burnt all his clothing. She was a very hard, strong woman whose language was punctuated by profanity and a coarseness that was intimidating.

A relationship with a man called John Chillingworth produced a son for the couple in 1991. Again, this pairing was doomed. Knight's accusations and vengeful acts against



Chillingworth, including smashing his false teeth because she thought that he was cheating on her, saw the relationship end in the early 1990s.

A GOOD BLOKE

John Price, known to all as 'Pricey', was a tough country man who loved a drink – too much in fact – and has been described widely in the Aussie vernacular as a good "knockabout guy". Mostly this meant he enjoyed living for the moment – he worked hard as a coal miner and played hard. He'd been married for several years and this had ended fairly amicably in the late 1980s. He remained good friends with his ex-wife. His relationship with Knight was something quite different.

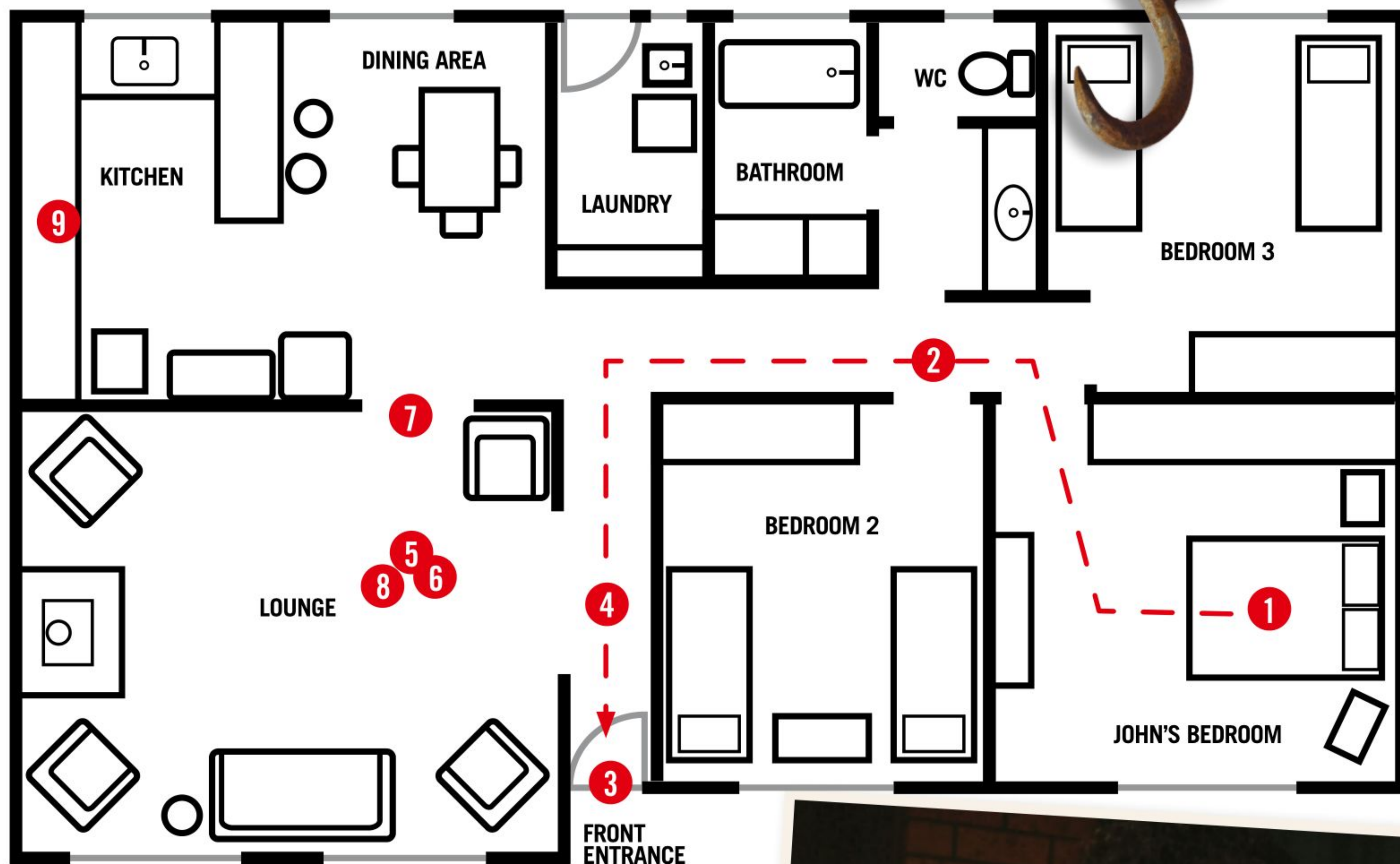
Pricey had an inkling his fiancée Kathy knight would be the death of him. Over time, the gnawing feeling became a palpable fear that he shared with several people. The pair had been in an on-again-off-again romance since around 1994. In one instance, documented in court records, Pricey told friend Trevor Lewis he feared Knight would knife him. In fact, Knight had threatened Pricey in the presence of Mr

ABOVE The kitchen of John Price's Aberdeen, New South Wales, home where Katherine Knight put his decapitated head in a pot on the stove

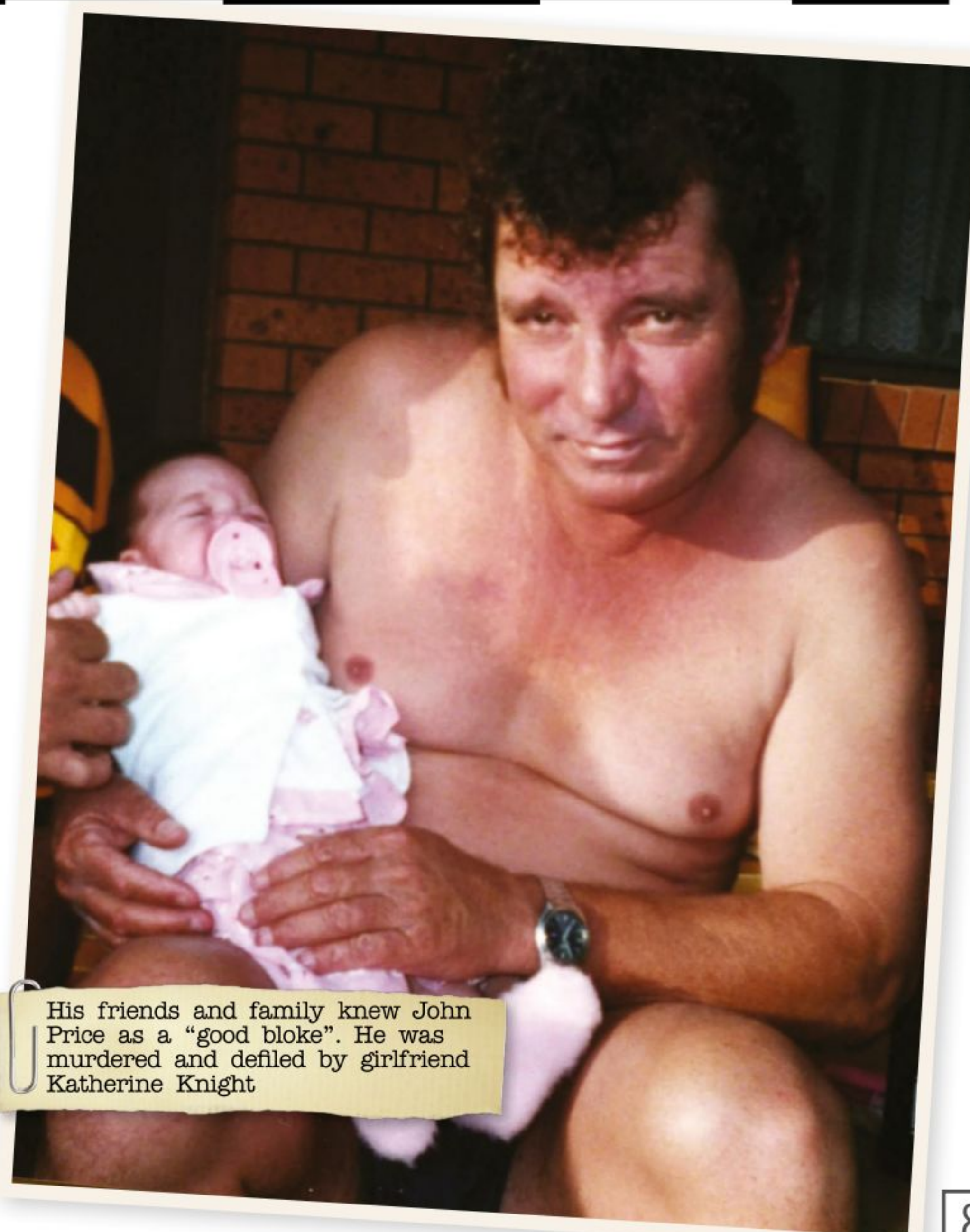
“THE KNIFE SET SHE'D USE TO SLAUGHTER ANIMALS WOULD BE PAINSTAKINGLY SHARPENED AND WASHED. SHE WAS OBSESSED WITH KNIVES”

SLAUGHTER HOUSE

A MODEST BRICK HOUSE WAS TURNED INTO A PLACE OF PURE EVIL WHEN KATHERINE KNIGHT SHARPENED HER KNIVES AND TURNED THEM ON JOHN PRICE



- 1** After sleeping together, Knight attacked Price when he was in bed, stabbing him in the front of his body. As he tried to get away, she continued to attack.
- 2** Price moved to the hallway in an attempt to get to the front door but was stabbed in the back several times by Knight. He tried to turn on the light – there were bloodstains all over the light switch.
- 3** Price managed to open the front door and stagger out of the house but was either dragged back in by Knight or fell back into the hallway.
- 4** A large pool of blood in the hallway indicated Price lay there for quite a while and died in that spot.
- 5** Knight dragged Price's body from the hallway into the lounge room, blood trailing behind.
- 6** It was in the lounge room that Knight started skinning Price's body in such a deft manner her victim's skin was removed to form one pelt.
- 7** Knight then hung the pelt on a meat hook on the main beam of the door in the lounge room. Police found it still hanging there when they arrived at the crime scene.
- 8** Knight then decapitated Price with one of her very sharp knives and she also sliced off sections of his buttocks.
- 9** The kitchen was the scene of the final indignity. Price's head was put in a pot of vegetables and cooked on the stove top.



His friends and family knew John Price as a "good bloke". He was murdered and defiled by girlfriend Katherine Knight



A DEADLY FETISH

KNIGHT'S UNHEALTHY OBSESSION WITH KNIVES — ESPECIALLY THE ONES SHE NEEDED FOR HER WORK — IS NOT UNCOMMON IN THE REALM OF SERIAL KILLERS

There was no doubt that Katherine Knight's fascination with knives and violence falls under the banner of a fetish called Piquerism. The word comes from the French *piquer* meaning, "to prick". Knight's first husband David Kellett said she loved her knives — the ones she'd take to work at the abattoir — more than anything else. A piquerist's behaviour can range from pricking or biting others' skin to the extreme of Knight who stabbed, then decapitated and skinned her victim. Other killers through the ages believed to have had piquerism include Jack the Ripper, the Russian mass murderer Andrei Chikatilo and child killer Albert Fish. It is still a relatively little understood human behaviour.



Lewis: "You'll never get me out of this house, I'll do you in first," she'd told him.

Pricey had told Knight he had no intention giving her any stake in his house, instead that it would be left to his two children. This enraged Knight, who believed she was entitled to a share in the property. Kathy had also threatened his life to others, including one of her brothers, Kenneth. She'd told Kenneth around September 1999: "I am going to kill Pricey and I am going to get away with it. I'll get away with it cause I'll make out I'm mad."

Feeling slighted again by Pricey over an imagined infidelity on his part, and the fact she sensed he was tiring of her, Knight got her video camera and took footage of some equipment — a first aid kit — in Pricey's home that he'd taken from the mine where he worked. She also made accusations to camera that the coal miner was violent towards her. She sent that tape to his bosses and Pricey was sacked. In disbelief that his fiancée would do such a thing, Pricey ended the romance. But Knight had a way of enticing him back. She could turn on the charm when she needed to,

showering complete devotion, attention and sex on the men she partnered with. Pricey had a weakness for Kathy, despite her volatility.

Six months after he'd lost his job because of Knight's vengeful act, Pricey was back in her arms. However the threats from Knight had been increasing and he had very real reason to believe his life was in danger. Pricey wanted out of the relationship.

BAD ROMANCE

In one incident Knight had slashed Pricey's chest with a knife, leaving a noticeable scar, and he'd long put up with the crescendo of Knight's moods. Like the other men in her life, she'd accuse Pricey of being unfaithful to her and all hell would break loose. She didn't care who was around to witness the turbulence.

On Monday 28 February 2000, he'd woken in his bed to see Knight standing there, her hands behind her back. He feared she had a knife and was going to kill him, so he leapt from the bed and fled the house. The next day he went to the nearest courthouse to get an Apprehended Violence Order out against Knight and have her removed from his home once and for all. When outlining his reasons to the magistrate, Pricey said Knight had stabbed him before and threatened to "cut his penis off".

“KNIGHT EXACTED HER UNSPEAKABLE REVENGE ON HER PARTNER, STABBING PRICEY 27 TIMES BEFORE SKINNING HIM”



The blood-soaked hallway floor where John Price lay dying after he was stabbed 27 times

ABOVE Murder victim John Price's brother was ejected from court after a shard of glass was found in his pocket

Knight was blind with rage. Her worst fears about Pricey leaving her were coming true. She wanted to get him and get him for good. Having threatened to kill him on so many occasions, she started to make plans that would end in one of the most disgusting crimes Australia has ever seen. Sometime on the night of 29 February 2000, the same day Price had gone to the courts to try to extricate himself from the relationship, his life would end.

There were a few warning signs that something very, very bad would happen. In an uncharacteristic move, Knight, not a particularly loving mother, took her eldest daughter, Natasha, out for a Chinese meal then asked her to look after her two younger children for the night. The boy and girl, who had different fathers, would have been 12 and eight at the time. Knight's eldest daughter Natasha was uneasy about her mother's demeanour that night and even told her mother: "I hope you are not going to kill Pricey and yourself."

Earlier in the evening Knight had spent time with her grandchildren and recorded a video (she'd picked up the video recorder from her twin sister's house where it had been for many months). The video mainly showed Knight in moments of affection as a doting grandmother, playing with her toddler grandchild. Then she looked to the camera and said: "I love all my children and I hope to see them again." After her family dinner, Knight went to Price's home to entice him back into her affections.

Then Knight exacted her unspeakable revenge on her partner, stabbing Price 27 times before skinning him like he was one of the animals at the abattoir. The nature of the crime shocked even the most experienced homicide detectives who were called to the scene. During that night of terror, she even took time between killing Price and decapitating him to drive to an automated bank teller – an hour-long round trip – and use the murdered man's bankcard to withdraw some of his money.

Knight, who was found in bed asleep by police on the morning of 1 March 2000, had taken considerable pleasure in her defilement of Price. What follows are the details that the news media decided it couldn't report at the time.

KILLER COOK

Supreme Court of New South Wales documents revealed that after the post-mortem examination of Mr Price, the coroner was able to re-sow the skin pelt that Knight had so skilfully removed back onto his body. Only one segment of skin had been left by Knight – a patch on the left of Price's upper chest that bore the visible scar of where she'd stabbed him earlier in their relationship. The biggest shock, among many of the gruesome discoveries at the crime scene, was when one detective lifted the lid of a still warm pot on the stove to reveal the victim's head inside.

Knight had also taken a sick aim at Price's children, serving up part of their father's flesh on plates with vegetables. She left a note for the children (so awful, its contents were suppressed by the courts) and scrappily written place cards under each plate.

Knight claimed not to have remembered what happened the night John Price was butchered. She tried to make it appear as if she'd made a suicide attempt, but this was not believable because there were not enough drugs in her system to do real damage, nor any alcohol detected in her bloodstream, and while she claimed she couldn't remember a thing about the murder, she could tell doctors exactly the drugs and amounts she had ingested. The amnesia was part of her story to make out that she was mad.

In the initial police interview, cited in court documents, Knight was asked:

Q: Kathy, I am investigating the death of John Price, known as Pricey to a lot of people in Aberdeen, on or about Wednesday the first of March this year. I have reason to believe that you may be the person responsible. Is there anything you can tell me about that matter?

A: I don't know anything on it.

Q: Can you recall, recall the last thing that you remember?

A: The last thing I remember was going out for tea with me daughter and the kids, coming home.

Probably the worst female killer in Australian history, Knight refused to talk about what happened that night. Her amnesia story didn't work and she wasn't declared insane. It was cold-blooded, premeditated murder.

Knight is the first woman in Australia to be sentenced to life without parole. She will live the rest of her life in Mulawa Women's Correctional Centre at Silverwater, Sydney, and her story is now being made into a movie based on Peter Lalor's book *Blood Stain*.

“ STARKWEATHER
PASSED SEVERAL
POLYGRAPHS
SUPPORTING
TALES OF CARIL’S
INVOLVEMENT ”

NATURAL BORN KILLERS

FOR TWO MONTHS IN THE 1950S, CHARLES STARKWEATHER AND HIS 14-YEAR-OLD GIRLFRIEND CARIL ANN FUGATE TERRORISED THE AMERICAN MIDWEST. BUT THEIR TRUE LEGACY EXTENDED FAR BEYOND THE KILLINGS, LINGERING EVEN UNTIL TODAY

WORDS BLAINE L PARDOE

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LEFT A downcast expression on Fugate's face, photographed on 30 January 1958, a day after the arrest

Few killing sprees have endured in the same way the Starkweather/Fugate murders have in the American media. There are many reasons for this morbid public fixation on the killings. First, the murderous spree was one of the first to be broadcast via television. Second, the brutality of the crimes took place in an unlikely place and time – in the solemn Midwest of the USA in the bitter cold of the winter. The crimes began in the same year that Sputnik was launched and when Bobby Fischer became America's chess champion. America was attempting to wrestle with its identity on the world stage, while rock and roll music was upsetting the social balance and societal norms. The 1950s were a pastoral prelude to the social uprising of the 1960s.

The murders were most likely not the act of just one deranged killer; Charles Starkweather's accomplice was a rebellious teenage girl, whose involvement in the crimes has been hotly contested. Throw into the mix Starkweather's look and style – which mirrored that of film star James Dean – and you had a combination that has inspired numerous books, films and songs. Yet while films such as *Natural Born Killers* took the tale to new heights in terms of sensationalism, only the most devout true crime aficionados really know the full story behind the wave of crime that rocked smalltown America.

TWISTED LOVE GONE BAD

Charles 'Charlie' Starkweather was born on 24 November 1938 in Lincoln, Nebraska. From a working class family, he was born the third of seven children. Far from the child one might expect to grow into a cold-hearted killer, Starkweather suffered from bad eyesight that went undiagnosed until he was 15. His school grades were poor and he only showed an aptitude in gym class. He had a speech impediment and was bowlegged – both of which drew the ire of school bullies, to whom he often responded with violence. An angry loner who struggled with relationships, by the age of 16 Charles had dropped out of high school.

While the rest of America enjoyed a post-war boom, Charles found himself struggling to make ends meet. His only stable job was that of a garbage collector, which didn't pay enough for him to enjoy life. His job required him to collect trash in pristine upper-class neighbourhoods. But Charlie was a slacker who identified with film star James Dean more

than his own role in society. He emulated Dean's clothing style, often wearing tight jeans, cowboy boots and even attempting to duplicate Dean's mannerisms. He slicked back his red hair in a duck-tail style, just like the actor. The "rebel without a cause" persona gave him a degree of control in his life and made him feel like he fitted in with the baby-boomer society while still standing out.

Also offering Charles's life even a shred of stability was his girlfriend, Caril Ann Fugate. The girl's older sister Barbara was dating Charlie's best friend, and the two met when Charlie was 18 years old, Caril just 13.

Caril came from a broken family and, like Charlie, she did not do well in school. Her mother had remarried and Caril's younger half-sister dominated her parents' attention. Charlie was an older boy, who dressed and acted like a "bad boy" figure. The more her parents tried to separate the two – mostly due to their age gap – the more they were drawn together. The combination was destined to prove deadly.

HIS FIRST VICTIM

Charles Starkweather didn't rush into murder, he slowly worked his way up to it. On 30 November 1957, the 18-year-old went into a Crest gas station where he had spotted a toy stuffed dog that he wanted to purchase for Caril. Lacking money, he asked the attendant, Robert George Colvert, if he would allow him to purchase the toy on credit. Colvert refused. It was such an innocuous thing, so minor, yet it set Starkweather down a long, bloody road. The frustration at not having enough money and once more being denied his heart's desire by society proved the last straw.

Starkweather was determined to kill the attendant but it took him time to muster the courage. Over the next few hours, he went in to purchase gum, then again to purchase some cigarettes. On the third visit he pulled a makeshift bandana over his face and confronted Colvert with a shotgun. When the young attendant could not open the safe, Charlie was forced to rob him of the contents of the till – just over \$100. Starkweather then ordered Robert Colvert into his car and drove him some distance. What happened next remains unclear to this day.

Charlie claimed that Robert struggled to take the shotgun. In a twisted form of self-defence, Starkweather shot Colvert in the head, leaving him face-down on a muddy country road.

200 Police Hunt Nebraska Teen Lovers Who Killed 7

Lincoln, Neb., Jan. 28 (Special).—More than 200 police tonight combed southeast Nebraska for two teen-age lovers, wanted for seven shotgun killings, including the girl's mother, stepfather and baby sister.

Col. C. J. Sanders, head of the highway patrol units in the state, said he feared the girl, Caril Fugate, 15, of Lincoln, might come her boy friend's eighth birthday. Charles Starkweather, 19, said, "stop at the house if the girl became a bur- den to him in his flight."

Keep Guns Ready

As the searchers fanned out across rural Nebraska, frightened families, terming Starkweather a "crazy killer," left their homes burning tonight and kept their guns close at hand. Posses combed all roads in the hope of finding the pair bottled up in an abandoned Lincoln. Murder suspects were issued for both.

Alarming out Sanders' fear for the safety was an autopsy report that one of the victims had been sexually assaulted.

Earlier, a farmer told police he had twice seen Starkweather driving a car through rutted roads not far from where the latest victims were found.



Carol King



Robert Jensen

to Starkweather's souped up car, abandoned near the farmhouse of August Meyer, 70, a wealthy bachelor.

Sheriff Merle Karnopp, believing he had the youngsters trapped inside, drew up a force of 15 state troopers, 12 police and sheriff's deputies in a skirmish line before the house. Over a loudspeaker he warned that whoever was inside had five minutes to come out.

police advanced. They found Meyer, dead of a shotgun blast.

He apparently had been shot in the back as he stood on his porch, then dumped in his own washhouse. An empty .410 gauge shotgun shell was found nearby – the same caliber used in all the killings. Meyer's billfold was gone and the house apparently had been ransacked.

Three-quarters of a mile from the farmhouse in an old storm cave by an abandoned schoolhouse, police found the bodies of Carol King, 16, and Robert Jensen, 17. The young couple, both of Bennett, had failed to return last night from a drive in Jensen's car.

Both had died of shotgun blasts, and the King girl had been sexually abused.

Jensen's car was gone.

Today's slayings took place 16 miles south of Lincoln, where the trail of death started last weekend. Police said Carol and Starkweather went berserk when her



Carol Fugate and Charles Starkweather—murder suspects. (United Press Telegram)

mother, Mrs. Pansy Street, went to call on her daughter and found Carol barring the door. Carol said: "Go home. They're all sick."

Suspicious, Mrs. Street returned with two detectives. A

and Mrs. Bartlett, both shot-gunned, and their daughter Betty Jean, 3, who had been beaten to death.

Starkweather also stood accused of a month-old shotgun slaying of a Lincoln service station owner.

“I GOT MAD AT PEOPLE”

STARKWEATHER'S WATERSHED KILLING HELPED THE TROUBLED TEEN FIND A NEW WAY OF EXPRESSING HIS RAGE.. IN A ROADTRIP RAMPAGE

30 NOVEMBER 1957

In the late evening, 21-year-old gas station attendant Robert Colvert is robbed of just over \$100 dollars and taken hostage at the Crest gas station at 1545 Cornhusker Highway by Charles Starkweather.

21 JANUARY 1958

Charles Starkweather (perhaps with the help of Caril Fugate) murders Fugate's mother, stepfather and half-sister, disposing of their bodies in a chicken coop and outhouse.

28 JANUARY 1958

At 4843 S. 24th Street, C Lauer Ward, his wife Clara and their maid Lillian Fencil are murdered in their posh country-club home. Caril and Charlie steal jewellery as well as the couple's Packard.

LINCOLN

Today such a crime could perhaps be solved in a matter of hours, but in 1957 Charles Starkweather somehow slipped under the police radar. For the first time in his life, he had spending money, although it did attract the attention of some store owners that most of his purchases were in change. Starkweather was nervous. He repainted his car with the profits of his robbery to make it harder to identify. The murder had outraged the idyllic Lincoln, Nebraska community; the 21-year-old victim's wife was pregnant and murders of this type were rare. Little did anyone realise that this was the first of many.

A TRIPLE HOMICIDE

Charlie confessed to Caril that he had robbed the gas station but never claimed any involvement in the murder. Just 14 at the time, his girlfriend didn't seem to question his version of events. While it is possible she had him sussed but kept quiet out of fear, it was just as likely that she naïvely took him at his word.

Both her family and Starkweather's recognised the inappropriate nature of their relationship and continued trying to separate them, which only seemed to drive them closer together. On 21 January 1958, Charlie showed up at the Bartlett home with a .22 rifle. The exact details of the ensuing confrontation with Caril's parents vary. Starkweather would claim that he had brought the rifle to take Caril's stepfather, Marion Bartlett, hunting... with the hope of bonding. But, instead, he stated that Caril's mother, Velda, angrily confronted him about his relationship with their daughter and that Marion tried to attack him with a hammer. Charlie shot him out of so-called self defence. Starkweather then turned on Velda, who he claimed had rushed him with a knife. He shot her in the face.

At this point, their two-and-a-half year old child, Betty Jean, was crying. She was hit in the throat by a thrown knife, then beaten to death with the butt of the rifle.

Marion, by Starkweather's account, had survived the initial attack and made his way to the bedroom. Charlie then finished him off with the knife.

So what was Caril's role, if any? After his arrest, Starkweather claimed that Caril was present at the time of



the murders and may have played a role in the death of her little sister. But Caril later claimed to have come home and, unaware of the murders, was taken hostage by Charlie. The story was that he had a gang holding her parents hostage and watching the house. If she left, she and they would be killed. It was a far-fetched story given that Caril knew Charlie was a man with few, if any, friends.

Velda's corpse was discarded in the outhouse, dropped into the latrine. The tiny body of Betty Jean was placed in a cardboard box and left in the outhouse. Marion, Caril's stepfather, had been dragged into the chicken coop. The crime scene was cleaned, making it impossible for the investigators of the time to determine what had unfolded.

Starkweather and Fugate didn't flee the crime scene. They remained living in the house for six days. Caril put a note up in the window reading "Stay a Way Every Body is sick with the Flue." Suspicions were aroused, but Caril managed to convince most to stay clear. One woman, Caril's grandmother Pansy, refused to buy into the story. The thought that a 14-year-old would be left in charge of a sick family was a thin excuse at best. Her grandmother demanded entry and threatened to return with the police.

“ HE SHOT HER IN THE FACE. THEIR TWO-AND-A-HALF YEAR OLD WAS HIT IN THE THROAT WITH A KNIFE, THEN BEATEN TO DEATH ”

Realising that his crimes were about to be revealed, Starkweather hit the road with Caril. On 26 January 1958, they went to see an old friend of the Starkweather family, August Meyer. The next day the bodies of the Barlett family would be found by the authorities, and Starkweather and Fugate would be wanted in connection with the murders.

THE SECOND TRIPLE HOMICIDE

70-year-old August Meyer lived 20 miles away in Bennet, Nebraska. Charlie had known and allegedly respected Meyer for his entire life. Living as a bachelor outside a small town made perfect sense for the two fugitives to select his residence as their prime spot in which to lay low. On the way there, Charlie's car became stuck in the muddy snow and the two of them had to take temporary shelter in the storm

RIGHT Starkweather and Fugate traded their vehicle four times during the murdering spree, from their Ford, to Jensen and King's car, to the Ward's 1956 Packard and finally Collison's Buick

BELOW Following his arrest, police confiscated Starkweather's hunting rifle, his two pistols and his hunting knife. The frenzy with which these weapons had been used horrified investigators

INVESTIGATORS examine the abandoned storm drain near the school where Starkweather and Fugate dumped the bodies of two of their victims

cellar of the disused District 79 schoolhouse. The pair went to Meyer's house under the pretence of using his horses to help get Charlie's car out of the mud. Again, accounts vary between Starkweather and Fugate. Charlie contended that Meyer had confronted him and he fired in self-defence (an established pattern in Starkweather's claims regarding his crimes). Not only was Meyer shot in the head but his dog was killed. Meyer's body was dragged to the outhouse – as had been done with Caril's mother – and left there covered with a blanket. Starkweather ransacked the home for weapons and money before staying the night.

They elicited help from a neighbour to try and get their car free, but to no avail. With the car still mired in the frigid mud, Starkweather and Fugate attracted the attention of another young couple driving by. 17-year-old Robert Jensen and his girlfriend, 16-year-old Carol King, pulled over to offer the hitchhikers a ride. Charlie produced a shotgun and demanded money. They ordered the couple to drive them back to the old schoolhouse in which they had taken refuge.

The young couple were blindfolded and ordered into the storm cellar. While accounts vary, it appears that Jensen was shot in the back of the head six times, while Carol was shot once in the head. King's pants and underwear were pulled down but there was no evidence of a rape.

Fugate's version of events was that she remained in the car during the entire murder, stunned by Starkweather's brutality. In Starkweather's version, he had attempted to rape Carol but failed to do so and Fugate stabbed her in a fit of jealous rage after she'd been shot dead.

THE THIRD TRIPLE HOMICIDE

With the discovery of August Meyer's, Robert Jensen's and Carol King's bodies on 28 January 1958, there was little doubt that Starkweather – and most likely Fugate – were on a murderous rampage of some sort. What no one expected was that they would return to Lincoln, Nebraska.

When the renegades arrived back in town, they drove by Caril's house to see if the bodies of her parents and sister had been discovered. Spotting several cars there, as well as police, they drove on by unimpeded. Charlie went to one of the more upscale neighbourhoods in Lincoln, where they bullied their way into the home of a businessman, C Lauer Ward. A friend of the Governor and the President of Capital Steel, he was at work when Starkweather forced his wife Clara to let them in. Charlie had Caril join them inside and forced their maid, Lillian Fencl, to make them breakfast. For Starkweather it had to be a satisfying turn of events. A one-time garbageman who had been forced to pick up their refuse was now forcing a well-to-do family to wait on him. It was only a matter of time before this farce would turn into tragedy.

In Charlie's version of events, Mrs Ward requested to go upstairs to change her shoes in the afternoon. He would later



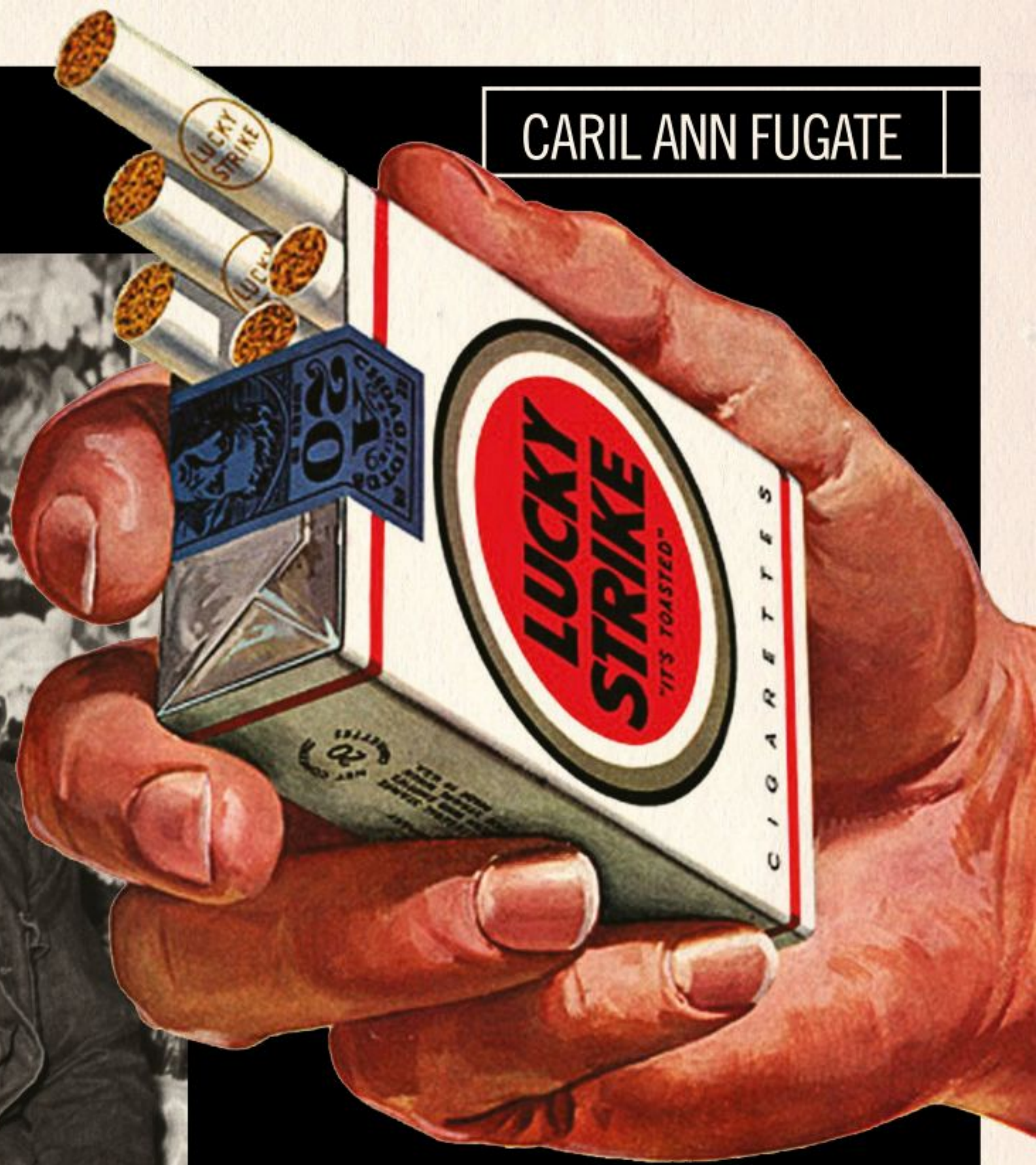
allege that she came at him with a .22, firing and missing, forcing him to throw a knife at her. The physical evidence doesn't support his account; no bullet holes were present and Mrs Ward suffered from stab wounds to the rear of her neck and torso. While dragging her body to conceal it, her poodle Suzy frightened Starkweather, who broke its neck.

When the afternoon newspaper was delivered, Charlie got a first glimpse of his new notoriety as a serial killer. For someone who desired the lifestyle of a rebel-outlaw, the news had to be the fulfilment of his dreams.

He and Caril robbed the Ward home of jewellery and money, and when Mr Ward arrived home he was confronted by Starkweather, gun in hand. The two struggled for control of the weapon, which was a battle Starkweather won. He shot Ward in the face. Caril then helped tie up the 51-year-old maid, who she claimed Charlie had stabbed repeatedly, chanting "Die, die, die!"

Fearing that they would be captured, they stole the Wards' Packard and planned to drive to Washington State, where one of Charlie's brother's lived. Starkweather left a letter for law enforcement in the house: "I and Caril are sorry for what has happen, cause I have hurt every body cause of it and so has





LEFT At the age of 14, Fugate's initial match to Starkweather had been frowned upon

ABOVE US advertisers in the 50s had carte blanche to advertise cigarettes the way they chose, and Starkweather bought into the glamour of smoking

“ CARIL USED THIS OPPORTUNITY TO JUMP OUT AND PROCLAIM ‘HE’S GOING TO KILL ME. HE’S CRAZY. HE JUST KILLED A MAN’ ”

Caril. But I'm saying one thing every body than cane out there was luckie there not dead even caril's sister.”

When Mr Ward's coworker went looking for him and discovered the bodies the next day (on 29 January 1958) panic struck the Lincoln community. Not only was this killing spree continuing, but Starkweather and Fugate had returned. Schools were let out and classes cancelled. Gun sales soared as the National Guard was deployed in Lincoln. No one realised that Charlie and Caril had set off away from the community. But their rampage of death was not yet over.

THE FINAL VICTIM

The big black Packard they stole from the Wards seemed out of place as the pair drove into Wyoming. Word of their murdering spree had begun to spread and Charlie became paranoid that the large stolen vehicle might lead them to a confrontation with the law, so he conceived of stealing another car.

While driving along a highway they came across a Buick parked alongside the road. Inside the vehicle was Merle Collison, a travelling shoe salesman hailing from Great Falls,

Montana. He had stopped to take a quick nap along the road in Douglas, Wyoming. Charlie woke him and, at gunpoint, suggested that they trade vehicles – the startled Collison quickly agreed. Starkweather then shot him in the head, neck, arm and leg. Rather than leave the corpse beside the road he slid it into the passenger seat and tried to take off with the new car. The problem was that Starkweather could not figure out how to release the emergency brake on the Buick. Attempting to get it moving, he stalled.

When a good Samaritan stopped to help the young couple, he was confronted with Charles Starkweather holding a gun. Rather than submit to Starkweather's demands, he sprang on the teen and the two men began to wrestle beside the roadway. Natrona County Sheriff's Deputy William Romer spotted the three cars beside the road and the two men struggling on the ground.

Caril used this opportunity to jump out and proclaim “He's going to kill me. He's crazy. He just killed a man.”

In the chaos, Starkweather broke free from the scuffle and made it to his car, setting off at over 100 miles per hour towards the town of Douglas. Caril identified the man behind the wheel, speeding into the distance, and Romer quickly

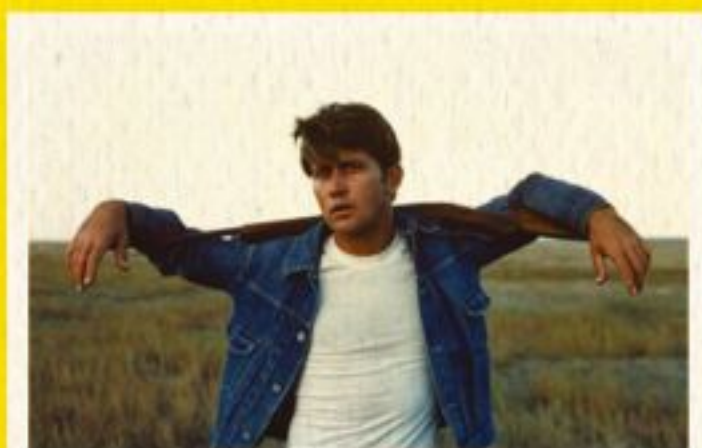
THE MEDIA MADE THEM SUPERSTARS

HOW STARKWEATHER AND FUGATE MADE THEIR WAY INTO POPULAR CULTURE



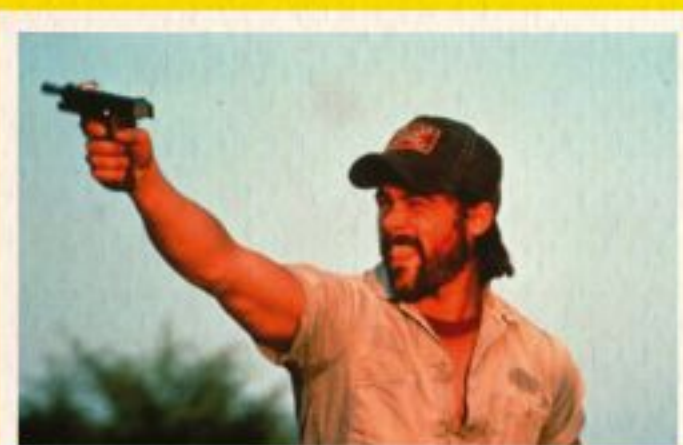
The Sadist (1963)

Directly inspired by the case, black and white shocker The Sadist keeps its inspirations carefully concealed.



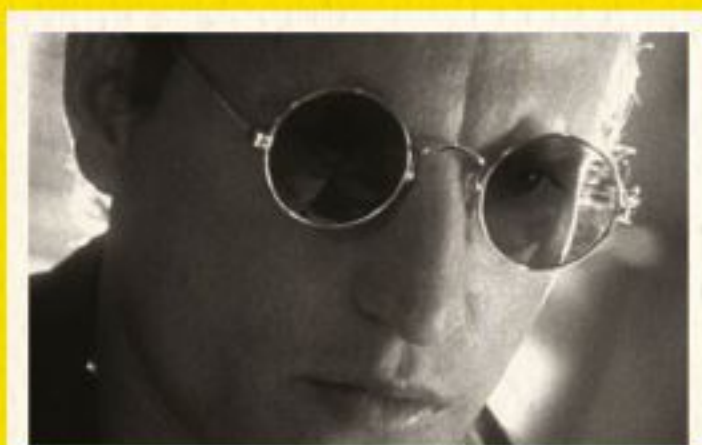
Badlands (1973)

Terence Malik's retro-tinged crime film gives the boy/girl killing spree a fairy tale quality. Hugely underated.



Kalifornia (1993)

Unhinged parolee Early Grayce torments a writer on a roadtrip around serial killer murder sites.



Natural Born Killers (1994)

Oliver Stone's ultra-violent black comedy is powerfully satirical.

OTHERS:

Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978)

Bruce Springsteen's *'Nebraska'* (1988)

Murder in The Heartland (1993)

The Frighteners (1996)

called for reinforcements and a roadblock to be set up to apprehend the fleeing vehicle.

Another deputy, Robert Ainslie caught up with Starkweather, tailing him and shooting at his vehicle. One of the shots shattered the rear window, cutting Starkweather's ear with a shard of the glass. County Sheriff Earl Heflin later told reporters, "It was his own blood that got him. He thought he was shot deader 'n hell when he saw that blood. I guess he thought he was bleeding to death. That's what kind of a yellow SOB he is."

JUSTICE?

We will never know the full story behind what actually occurred in most of these crimes. Starkweather's accounts of the murders changed almost every time he told them. Then there's Caril Fugate, who to this day continues to maintain her innocence, that she had nothing to do with the murders and that she too was merely a victim of Charles Starkweather's murderous rampage.

For a while after he was apprehended, Charlie corroborated with Caril's proclamations of her own



ABOVE With a bloodstained shirt from a cut sustained during his arrest, Starkweather is led to jail

ABOVE RIGHT 8 May 1958, and Charles is led to court. It would be a year before he was eventually executed

innocence and admitted he had been holding her hostage. Later in his legal proceedings, that story changed when Caril refused to meet with him. Starkweather went on to claim that Caril had been an active participant in many of the crimes. She was guilty of the mutilation of Carol King's body, which was repeatedly stabbed in the pubic area, Starkweather claimed Caril had committed out of jealousy. Starkweather passed several polygraphs supporting tales of Caril's involvement.

It was very difficult, if not impossible, for the public to accept that Caril Fugate had lived for several weeks with Charles Starkweather and did not have any opportunity to escape and inform the authorities of the crimes that had transpired. Fugate claimed that she feared for her life and that Starkweather often tied her up, but the fact that she lived with Starkweather in her parents' family home, with their bodies decomposing only a couple of feet away, cast very serious doubts on the credibility of her defence. Caril also claimed that she did not know her parents and baby sister were dead.

When she was tried for her crimes, Starkweather was brought in by the prosecution to testify against his former



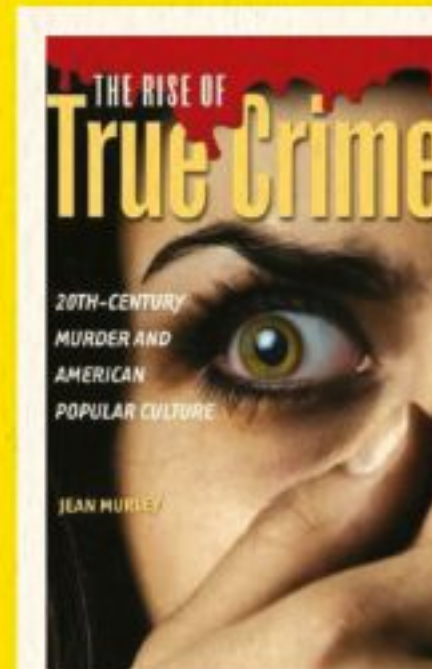
“ OF THE MUTILATION OF CAROL KING, REPEATEDLY STABBED IN HER PUBIC AREA, CARIL COMMITTED THE ACT OUT OF JEALOUSY ”

lover and partner in crime. On 21 November 1958, Caril Ann Fugate was found guilty and her jury gave her a life sentence. On 25 June 1959, Charles Starkweather was put to death by electric chair for his part in the crimes. For the most part he was unrepentant about the murders he committed and steadfastly stated that Fugate had been a willing participant, not a victim.

Caril Fugate's sentence was commuted in 1973. She was awarded parole in 1976. Fugate then moved to Lansing, Michigan where she worked as a janitor in a hospital. She married Frederick Clair in 2007 and moved to Stryker, Ohio. She was injured and widowed when her husband died in a car crash in Tekonsha, Michigan in 2013, once more bringing her into the public spotlight. The infamy of Starkweather and Fugate's numerous crimes refuses to go quietly into the cold of a winter night.

FROM MURDER TO MYTHOLOGY

DR JEAN MURLEY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND THE AUTHOR OF THE RISE OF TRUE CRIME: 20TH-CENTURY MURDER AND AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE, ON THE REAL NATURAL BORN KILLERS



It has been said that the Starkweather crime spree was the first killing spree in the TV era.

What role do you feel television may have played in this crime?

The Starkweather crimes were covered extensively in the true crime magazines of the time, and they struck a chord with readers

for several reasons: first and foremost, this was the time period when anxiety and fear about juvenile delinquency and youthful criminality was running high in the nation, just after World War II. As the first wave of the baby boomers hit adolescence in the late 1950s, law enforcement authorities began to warn of a coming crime wave, as it was understood even then that younger people tended to commit more crimes. 18-year-old Starkweather and his 14-year-old girlfriend, Caril Ann Fugate, fit the profile of the juvenile offenders of that period – young, aimless and heartless kids. The stunning randomness of their murders also hit home, as this murder spree rocked the country's seemingly safe heartland. Starkweather and Fugate seemed like harbingers of teenaged doom and the fulfilment of the darkest prophecies of paranoid cops and parents. I think these murders have spawned so many pop culture iterations because of the three-fold nature of the spree: it was a mixture of romance, violence and random criminality, three elements of endless fascination for both producers and consumers of popular culture. A perfect storm of audience interest.

What does this popularisation of murder say about our culture and collective memories this event?

It's a huge subject; the short (and inadequate) answer is that fascination with crimes like this (serial and spree killings) points in the same direction that fascination with crime fiction does – that true crime functions as a catharsis, a way of relieving anxiety about crime, a mode of processing the violent and incomprehensible actions of others. I believe that the majority of viewers and readers seek some form of relief from fear. What's most interesting to me is that the fear of crime is detached from and not correlated with actual crime statistics; rates of violent crime have plummeted in this country over the past couple of decades, but our appetite for true crime (and crime fiction) has remained steady.



NO STRINGS ATTACHED

THE TERRIFYING AND TRAGIC DEATH OF A BELGIAN SKYDIVER PROMPTED
POLICE TO INVESTIGATE AN AFFAIR WITH HER INSTRUCTOR AND A
SUSPICIOUS RIVAL FOR HIS AFFECTIONS

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

On a brisk November day in 2006 Els Van Doren, a married mother of two, met a terrifying end as she hurtled to her death at 190 kilometres per hour. She and the rest of her skydiving group had jumped out of an aeroplane at 4,000 metres to complete what was supposed to be a routine dive, but as the rest of the group descended to safety they could only watch as Van Doren struggled to open her parachute. Her instructor and paramour Marcel 'Mars' Somers later recalled how he had attempted to get closer to his flailing student in an attempt to rescue her, but it was in vain – he couldn't save her. With no sign of the main parachute or the backup parachute reserved for such emergencies emerging, she plummeted into a residential garden in the eastern suburbs of Opglabbeek, Belgium.

But when police discovered the camera Van Doren had mounted on her helmet and saw the video footage of the distressed skydiver frantically attempting to save herself in the moments before her death, it became clear to them



“CLOTTEMANS SNAPPED AS SHE HEARD THE PASSIONATE PAIR MAKING LOVE THROUGH THE WALLS”

that Van Doren's death had been no freak accident or suicide but that someone had very deliberately cut the parachute cords. But who? An enraged husband scorned by his wife's infidelity? A jealous lover? Or someone else who stood to gain something with Van Doren out of the picture?

HIGH ON LOVE

As police began their initial investigations into Van Doren's death, they built a picture of how she found herself falling in love with her instructor, then falling to her death months later. Van Doren had met Somers, a Dutch skydiving instructor, when she had joined his parachute club in 2005 in Zwartberg, Belgium, just 32 kilometres from the Dutch border. She had not been the only student taken by his charm. 22-year-old Els 'Babs' Clottemans, a primary school teacher, was also smitten.

While the trio met up every weekend at the club, Somers met with the women individually, usually spending Friday nights with Clottemans and Saturday nights with Van Doren. He denied that Van Doren knew anything about his relationship with Clottemans but admitted he could see that his affections for the married mother rankled with his

ABOVE Clottemans had initially told investigators that the victim was her “pillar” and her “best friend” but admitted sending hateful messages to her in a bid to put her off Somers

INSET Experts ruled that both the pilot chute and a small safety chute had been deliberately cut, and that it could have been done in half a minute with the use of scissors

other lover. The relationship developed into a love triangle, and Clottemans became all too aware that Van Doren was increasingly favoured by Somers, who made it clear that Clottemans could either like it or leave.

By the summer of 2005 Clottemans decided that the relationship between Van Doren and Somers was beginning to leave her sidelined. She sent a threatening and anonymous letter to Van Doren and began to call her incessantly. In the ten months before her death, Clottemans had phoned ‘the other woman’ more than 200 times. When their stunt on 18 November 2006 ended in tragedy police had a number of viable suspects. However, Clottemans was not initially on the police's radar. Many regarded the pair as close friends, and few knew about the love triangle that had panned out over the last few months. When Clottemans gave a statement to police, she admitted that she had been close to the couple and that she had a romantic liaison with Somers, who had “led her astray”. But she told investigators that their relationship had fizzled out.

It had been only a month since Van Doren had died when Clottemans attempted suicide after Somers officially ended their relationship. She was due to give a second statement to police just hours later. Her behaviour alarmed investigators, and after she recovered police continued to apply pressure on Clottemans. A suicide letter left for Somers depicted her level of guilt for her jealousy of Van Doren, but once fully recovered she professed her innocence. But when investigators questioned Somers they realised that the trio were not as close as Clottemans had claimed.

DEATH PLUNGE

A video played to the court conclusively showed that during Van Doren's final jump a series of deliberate malfunctions resulted in her death. As the ground drew closer, Van Doren watched as her team's canopies safely deployed.

At a height of approximately 1,000 metres she looked up at the white spare parachute that hung over her but remained closed. She looked down and back up again as she waited for the parachute to deploy. She pulled on her belt but nothing happened. In the court the video stopped there – the jury were spared the final panic-stricken seconds before Van Doren crashed into the ground.

The main canopy is a piece of lightweight nylon that, when deployed, has several sets of fabric ribs that divide the parachute into individual cells when they are filled with air.

The pilot chute is a small parachute activated by the skydiver. It is attached to the main canopy, and when it catches the wind should pull the main canopy out of its container. But the strings to Van Doren's chute had been severed.

Parachutes are fitted with an AAD (Automatic Deployment Device), which will release the reserve parachute at around 230 metres from the ground, but with Van Doren's reserve sabotaged the AAD was unable to deploy it.

Should the pilot chute fail, the reserve parachute can be deployed, but with those lines slashed it too failed, and Van Doren was faced with a terrifying end.

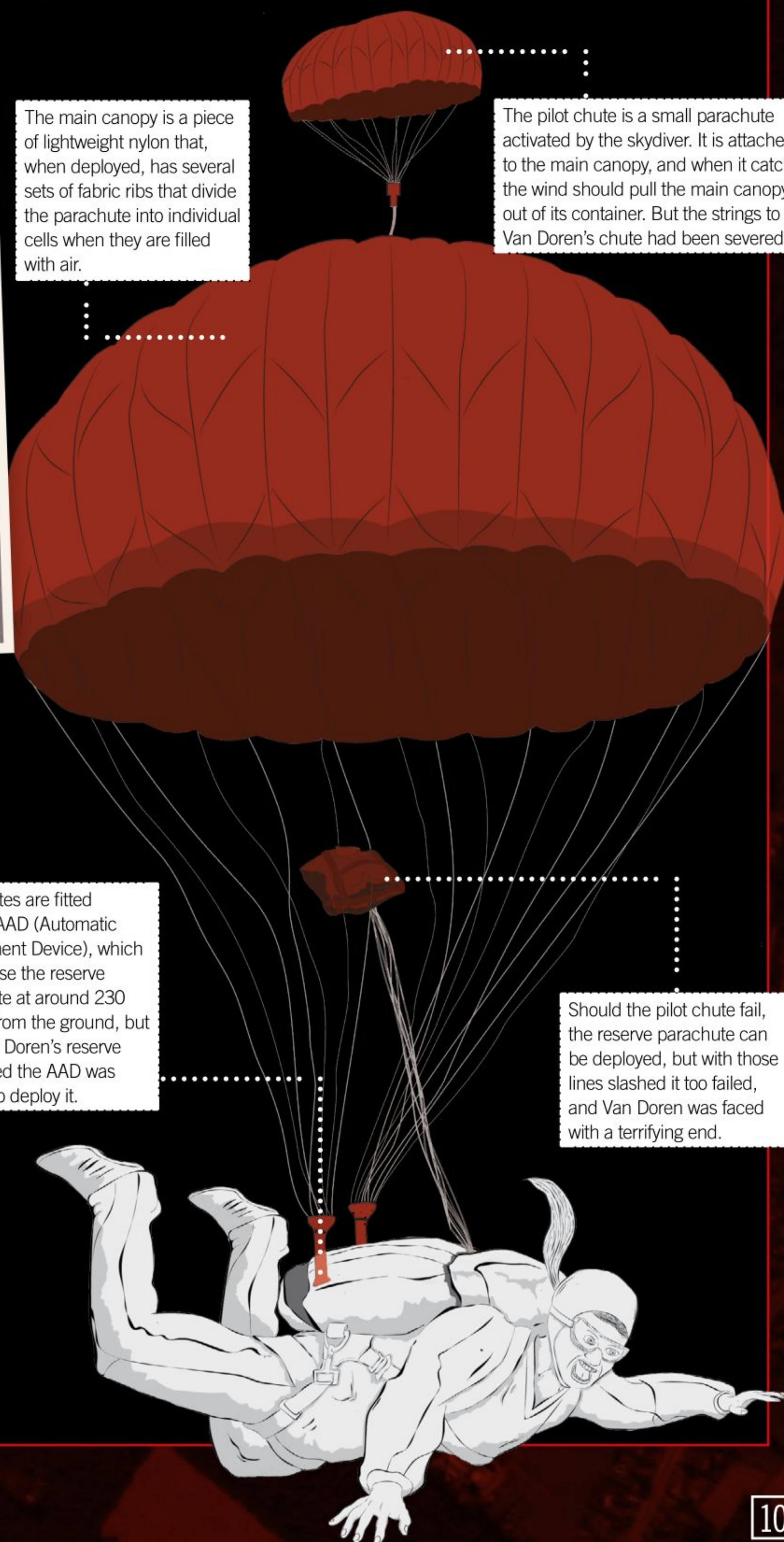
In order to distinguish between his two mistresses, Somers stripped Clottemans of her name and dubbed her 'Babs', reserving 'Els' for the 'wife of his life', Van Doren

According to Somers, after a brief sexual relationship he had tried to "shrug off" a clingy Clottemans, but she had persisted. Around a week before their final jump a blithely unaware Van Doren had turned up at Somers's home in the southern Dutch city of Eindhoven, where he and Clottemans had been spending the evening. Clottemans ended up staying downstairs all night, confined to the sofa, while Somers and Van Doren slept upstairs.

Investigators realised this could have been the exact moment that Clottemans snapped as she heard the passionate pair making love through the walls. Van Doren's parachute had been left for the evening in the hallway near where the scorned lover had been sleeping. It became obvious that Clottemans had the motive and the opportunity, and with Van Doren dead she would have the man of her desires all to herself. It took investigators more than two months to piece together the events leading up to Van Doren's death, but after questioning Clottemans for more than 100 hours police arrested her on suspicion of murder.

FALL FROM CLOUD NINE

The allegations against Clottemans were based entirely on circumstantial evidence, and her lawyers argued the entire case was preposterous. The sleepy town of Tongeren was suddenly the scene of international focus as the much-



JUST ME AND MY DADDY

Psychologists who evaluated Clottemans argued that she displayed signs of an Electra complex. This psychosexual condition, coined by Carl Jung in 1913, is described as the feminine counterpart of the Oedipus complex (a male's desire to eliminate the father to take his place).

Clottemans, who was approximately 20 years younger than both Van Doren and Somers, had described her relationship with the pair to psychologists. It rang true to them as that of a mother/father relationship. With Clottemans having lost her father at a young age, her relationship with Somers was thought to be highly sexual and dependent. When it was clear that Van Doren came between her and Somers's affections, she saw no choice but to get rid of her.

The complex derives from Greek mythology, taking inspiration from the story of Princess Electra, who killed her mother in retaliation for her murdering her father.

anticipated trial began in September 2010. More than 200 witnesses were expected to testify in the trial that would span over four weeks. The northern Flemish town was gripped by the proceedings as journalists packed themselves into an adjacent room where they could watch the trial by remote video. A live television feed was set up so that the rest of the country could watch as attorneys read out a 68-page charge sheet that placed Clottemans at the centre of what was being called 'a crime of passion'.

Prosecutors argued that Clottemans, who suffered from psychiatric issues, had heard the pair making love through the thin walls at Somers's home. They claimed that she had boiled over and cut the cords of her rival's parachute in retaliation. Somers described what he believed to be the chain of events leading up to his lover's murder: "When Els and I went to bed, Babs kept turning it over. Something cracked," he told the court. "She took a pair of scissors and cut the parachute cords. For me, that's the most realistic scenario." He later described Clottemans to the court as having been a "very good girlfriend." However, he added, "The Babs whom I knew died together with Els. She has turned into a wolf in sheep's clothes."

He also recalled Clottemans's strange behaviour the following morning: "On Saturday morning, Els and I lay naked in bed. Suddenly, she (Clottemans) stormed into the bedroom and jumped on the bed. I lay between Els and Babs, which took about ten minutes. She was bored and was in search of a hairdryer." Somers said that in his opinion Clottemans had entered the bedroom fuelled with adrenaline from her murderous stunt. The following evening she had waited outside his home until Van Doren left, and then the pair had "raw sex". He had always been worried that she would reveal the affair to Van Doren's husband Jan De Wilde, an Antwerp jeweller and the father of her two children.

This version of Clottemans's character was further reinforced by another member of the parachute group, who described Clottemans as "invasive", "excessive" and a "drama queen". One of the few pieces of solid evidence entered into the Belgian court was the dramatic footage from Van Doren's



“ THE FIRST QUESTION A FAMILY NORMALLY ASKS IS WHETHER THE VICTIM SUFFERED... WE DON'T HAVE TO ASK, IT WAS FILMED ”

skydiving camera, which had been mounted onto her helmet. Her husband and children left the court as the victim's death played out on screen.

In the video four parachutists could be seen huddled together inside the Cessna 208 plane, which was being driven by pilot Luc Deijgers. They were 4,000 metres off the ground and were all laughing, joking and in good spirits. Outside, the sky was clear and blue despite the group's fears that it would rain that day. First a group of four jumped over the side, followed by two others. Then parachutist Tom Bolsuis, who was leading the formation, swung his arm to give the signal to Clottemans, Somers and Van Doren that it was their turn to jump. What could not be seen on camera was that Clottemans hung back slightly, jumping a few seconds too late to join them. The video showed Van Doren floating on her back, looking up at the clear sky and out over the Limburg landscape. As she descended, she could see the residential area of Opglabeeek. She didn't know this was the last thing she would see before her death.

An attorney representing the Van Doren family told the court, "The first question a family normally asks is whether the victim suffered, whether she knew what happened. We don't have to ask, it was filmed." Despite evidence showing that Van Doren's death was not a suicide, there was no DNA evidence that directly tied Clottemans to the murder.

ABOVE The defendant claimed she had found a missing piece of Van Doren's parachute "by chance" in a tree while she was lost driving down a road, prompting her lover to suspect she was hiding something



Clottemans denied any role in her friend's death. She told the jury that during her many hours of questioning, police "wanted me to confess. But confess to what? I couldn't confess, as I hadn't done anything."

Also entered into the trial as evidence was the victim's parachute with its severed cords. Experts determined that it would have taken seconds to slash the parachute. In 2007 Clottemans had written to a Belgian newspaper about the death of Van Doren. She explained how at the time she had suffered from low self-esteem. "I always knew I was number two for Marcel," she wrote.

FREEFALL

Three psychologists assessed Clottemans and described her in their report as "narcissistic" and "deeply psychopathic". They also commented on how she was able to maintain a facade that she had lost a friend in a tragic accident, but underneath it all she was "cold and without emotion". The doctors determined that the event that had contributed to her state of mind was her father's death when she was just two years old. His death had deeply affected her, and at the age of 16 she attempted suicide, which then forced her to seek psychological help. The psychologists branded her "a danger for society".


Clottemans's unstable mind was the only mitigating condition according to Michel Jordans, the judge presiding over the high-profile trial. But her attorney Vic Van Aelst argued that there was not "a shred of hard evidence to justify locking somebody up in a cell for the rest of her life, only a lot of hocus-pocus." The defence's arguments hinged not only on the lack of evidence but on the argument that Clottemans was not in love with Somers. Her lawyer did not deny that there had been a relationship between his client and Somers but dismissed the intensity of the relationship as tittle-tattle and hearsay.

Attempting to confirm his client's mental stability, he pointed out how she had completed teacher training and worked as a primary school teacher in the Brussels district of Anderlecht since she was released on bail in 2008. He also argued that his client had been belittled and intimidated by investigators when they interrogated her, adding that the investigators had formed their own version of the truth and were not prepared to deviate from it, causing them to focus solely on his client as the perpetrator.

Despite a lack of the fundamental components of guilt – a confession, hard evidence and witnesses – Clottemans was handed down a sentence of 30 years in prison on 21 October 2010, after the jury of seven men and five women decided that she was guilty of premeditated murder. Her sentence had only been a whisker away from life behind bars. Speaking during sentencing, the judge said, "The facts are very cruel and conclusive. The victim had no chance and would have consciously experienced her approaching death. There are no extenuating circumstances. The accused is a danger in the future." As her sentence was handed down, Clottemans stood emotionless, listening to the fate she had been dealt by the judicial system. Under Belgian law, she will be eligible for parole after one-third of her sentence, meaning she could apply for release in 2020. To this day she denies the murder.

Some believe Clottemans has been unfairly convicted. Citing a lack of DNA evidence linking her to the death of Van Doren, crowds released balloons into the sky in protest at Clottemans's 30-year sentence for killing her love rival.





KILLER NURSE ON WARD 4

ONE OF BRITAIN'S MOST HATED WOMEN, BEVERLY ALLITT PROWLED THE HALLS OF A LINCOLNSHIRE HOSPITAL TAKING THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO DEPENDED ON HER THE MOST: CHILDREN

WORDS EMILY WEBB

In Britain, the phrase “killer nurse” is synonymous with one name: Beverley Allitt. Her victims were some of the most vulnerable – children she was entrusted to care for in her duties as an enrolled nurse.

Hiding behind the caring guise of her profession, Allitt did the unthinkable and harmed the youngsters in her care, time and time again. Four children died and several others almost lost their lives and were left disabled after Allitt gave them injections of insulin.

The plump and rather unremarkable teen had started nurse training in 1988. She had many absences due to “ill health” and this meant she failed her final exams. Allitt struggled to find a job at the end of the course but the overstretched Grantham and Kesteven Hospital (now known as Grantham and District) finally relented and gave Allitt a position on Children’s Ward 4 in February 1991, as a ‘sick children’s nurse’, where there was a severe staff shortage.





In fact, Allitt was the only applicant and a particularly poor one at that. Despite her enthusiasm, Allitt had been a sub-standard student and had missed weeks of school during her training year, so it was a sign of the hospital's desperation that she was hired to work there.

Allitt was seemingly well liked by her colleagues, and the parents of the children she cared for were impressed by the young woman who seemed to be so devoted to her patients and her profession. Allitt was always willing to help, and changed shifts whenever asked so that she could help her colleagues out.

THE FIRST OF MANY

Seven-week-old Liam Taylor was the first child to die in unexpected and mysterious circumstances. Liam had been admitted to hospital with a chest infection and his parents were reassured that their baby was in safe hands. Going out for a quick meal, they returned to the hospital to find their son with laboured breathing and blue skin. Liam was stabilised by the staff and he recovered, but it was a terrifying experience for his parents.

Baby Liam, now under the one-to-one care of Allitt, who was tasked with watching him closely, suffered another relapse in the middle of the night. He had stopped breathing for more than an hour but was revived and put on life support. His shattered parents made the heartbreaking decision to withdraw their son from the ventilator and he died in their arms on 23 February.

Consultant Paediatrician Dr Charith Nanayakkara was bewildered by Liam's death. He did not feel comfortable with the pathologist report that stated Liam had died from cardiac arrest and he pushed for a second opinion. Understandably, the young doctor was worried he had missed something, though there was no evidence to suggest this was the case. He asked for a second autopsy to be conducted. "My requests were completely rejected," Dr Nanayakkara told the documentary *Crimes That Shook Britain*.



Allitt had started on Ward 4 just two days before Liam's death. The key to the refrigerator that held medication – including insulin – on Ward 4 had gone missing at around the same time. The last person to have it was Allitt. She insisted that she gave it to another staff member (she couldn't remember who), but the hospital management never followed this up.

DEATH MAKES HER ROUNDS

Less than two weeks after Liam's death, an 11-year-old boy, Timothy Hardwick, suffered what appeared to be a heart attack and died. Timothy had cerebral palsy and was no stranger to hospitals. He had a seizure at his home and was admitted to Ward 4, and unfortunately into the path of Allitt.

Then there was the near death of 14-month-old Kayley Desmond, who had arrived at the hospital suffering with a chest infection, of which she was expected to recover from. However, she was cared for by Allitt, who ran frantically to her colleagues for a "crash team" and Kayley almost died of a "heart attack". The staff were bewildered. Two children had tragically died and several more had been near-death.

Five-month-old Paul Crampton was admitted into Grantham Hospital on 23 March with bronchiolitis, a common respiratory infection in babies. Paul was otherwise happy and in good health, and spent three days in the children's ward for drug treatment and to be monitored. On 28 March, Dr Nanayakkara, who had just deemed Paul to be fit for discharge within days, came back to find the baby was in an unexpectedly very poor condition.

“ HIDING BEHIND THE CARING GUISE OF HER PROFESSION, ALLITT DID THE UNTHINKABLE AND HARMED THE YOUNGSTERS IN HER CARE, TIME AND TIME AGAIN ”

ABOVE LEFT Allitt enjoys the company of her fiancé, Stephen Biggs. He later reported that she coerced him into a relationship and was frequently violent, kneeling him in the groin during vicious rows

ABOVE Allitt in 1991 with an unknown friend

CURES THAT KILL

ALLITT IS JUST ONE OF MANY 'ANGELS OF DEATH' WHO USED MEDICINE TO DO HARM

INSULIN

USED BY: Beverly Allitt

VICTIMS: Four dead, many more injured
High doses of the drug, used in the management of diabetes, can lead to hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) coma and death. Allitt injected high quantities of insulin into her tiny victims.

DIGOXIN

USED BY: Charles Cullen

VICTIMS: At least 29-35, possibly hundreds
Used in the treatment of heart failure and to regulate the rhythm of the heart. Overdoses are lethal to people with heart conditions, as New Jersey's most prolific killer proved.

EPINEPHRINE

USED BY: Kristen Gilbert

VICTIMS: Four dead, two hurt
A stimulant that causes the heart to race out of control when used in overdoses. Kristen Gilbert murdered four patients at a Massachusetts veterans' hospital in this manner. She was convicted of the murders in 2001 and is serving a life sentence without the chance of parole.

SUCCINYLCHOLINE

USED BY: Genene Jones

VICTIMS: At least one, could be as many as 50
A muscle relaxant that helps with the insertion of a breathing tube used to ventilate patients during surgery. Without respiratory support, Succinylcholine will kill. Genene Jones, jailed in 1985, is suspected of killing as many as 50 babies in Texas, some of them with the drug.

RIGHT Insulin injections are used to control blood sugar levels. High doses can be dangerous in infants

The hospital was on edge. Now there were very strong suspicions that someone was deliberately setting out to harm the children.

Five-year-old Bradley Gibson, in hospital with pneumonia, suffered a cardiac arrest the day after Paul Crampton almost died. Bradley was revived. Allitt was on duty that night and the child suffered another heart attack when she visited his room. He was later transferred to another hospital and made a full recovery.

Two days after Paul Crampton was sent to another hospital, a two-year old boy called Henry Chan nearly died. Henry was in hospital after suffering a fractured skull in a fall at his home, and he was making a good recovery until he suffered a sudden attack, just like the other children had.

Identical twins Becky and Katie Phillips were born nine weeks prematurely in January 1991. On 5 April 1991, Becky was admitted to Grantham hospital after she had begun vomiting from a suspected milk allergy. One week later,

ABOVE Five-month-old Paul Crampton was one of the few Allitt victims to recover after he was moved to a different hospital

RIGHT Grantham and Kesteven Hospital, as it appeared at the time of Allitt's employment

"He was clammy, he was breathing short and fast," Dr Nanayakkara said. "He needed immediate intravenous fluid and checking of his blood for suspicions of low sugar and any other possible infections. Some of the results from the laboratory came back to say that he had significant low sugar. Fortunately, I had given the right fluid and he recovered fairly quickly."

But baby Paul suffered yet another attack. Again, tests showed he had low sugar and he was given emergency treatment. He recovered.

TERRIBLE REALISATION

Paul's mysterious and rapid health decline and near death made Dr Nanayakkara think about Liam Taylor, who had died just weeks before, and the similarities between the two cases. The connection to Allitt wasn't made then, but when she went on three days' leave, all on the ward became stable again. Baby Paul was making a good recovery and there were no more sudden attacks in other children.

Unbelievably, Paul had another hypoglycaemic attack and stopped breathing. Allitt had returned to work that same day and had been assigned to give the baby one-to-one care. Paul was eventually transferred to a larger, more specialised hospital, and Allitt, trusted by the boy's parents, accompanied Paul and his mother in the ambulance for the journey.

Becky was much better and allowed to come home. Allitt, who had known the children's mother Mrs Phillips from outside the hospital, had formed an immediate and strong bond with them. The family trusted the young nurse and she became a friend.

The family had brought Becky home from hospital, but she was unsettled and suddenly stopped breathing. Rushed back to the hospital, Becky died.

It was heart wrenching for her parents, but more pain was to come. As a precaution, doctors thought it best that the surviving twin Katie be admitted for observation. As the girls were identical twins, they feared that whatever had been wrong with Becky could also affect Katie.

Unbeknown to anyone, Katie was under the care of the killer who murdered her sister. Allitt injected baby Katie with potassium and insulin in an attempt to kill her. Her parents Sue and Peter had gone to the canteen, and when they returned a short time later, Katie was on life support and Allitt told the traumatised couple that she had found the baby not breathing.

Doctors spent almost an hour trying to revive Katie, and by the time they got a heartbeat, the tiny girl had experienced so much oxygen loss to the brain that she was permanently disabled from Allitt's attack.

In an interview that ran in *The People* newspaper on 31 January 1999, Mrs Phillips recalled that the couple never could have guessed that Allitt had murdered Becky and seriously injured Katie.

"After Becky died, Allitt said how sorry she was and not to worry about Katie because she would be fine. She seemed good at her job. You would never think she would harm anybody," Mrs Phillips told the paper.

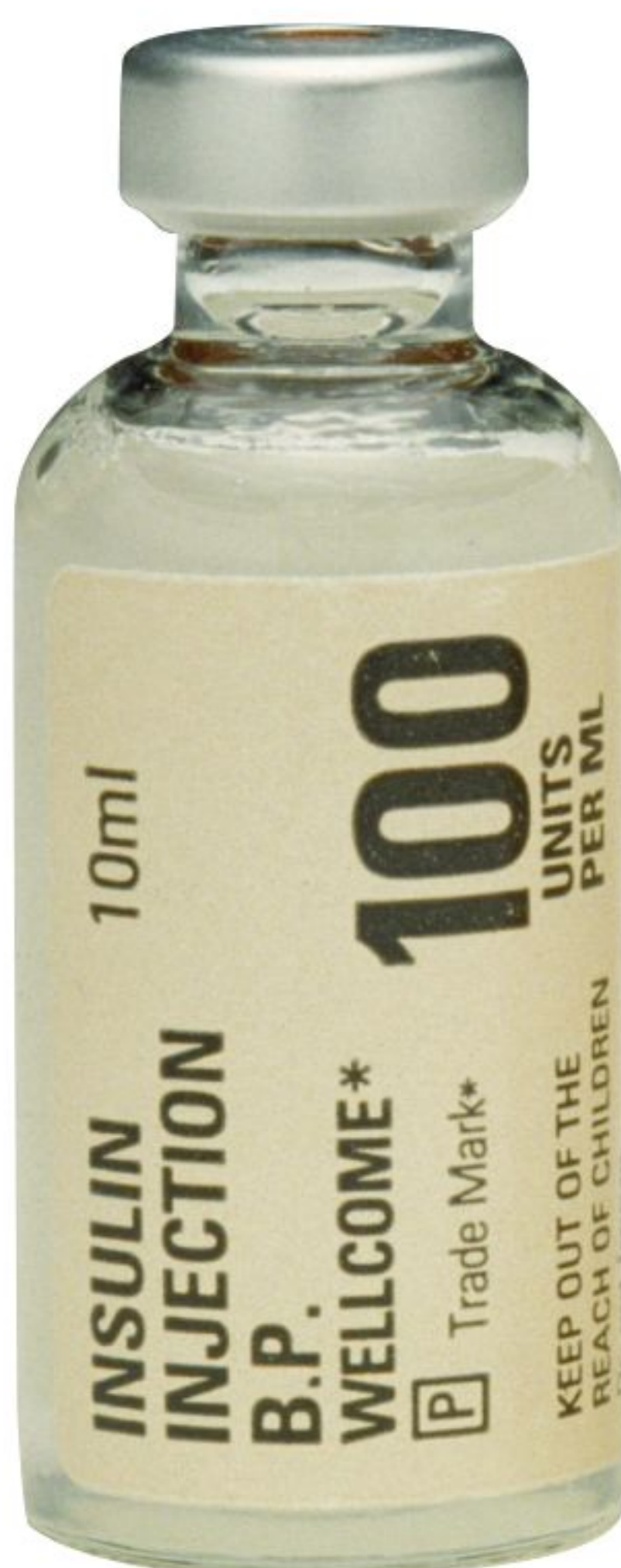
"I thought when she found Katie not breathing, she had saved her life. We were so grateful we even suggested she could be Katie's godmother," she recalled.

THE BODYCOUNT GROWS

Michael Davidson, aged just six, was rushed to the hospital on 7 April after he was injured in an accident with an air rifle. He was in a serious condition with the pellet lodged in his chest, but he was expected to recover well. Michael ended up in Allitt's care as he recovered from his surgery.

Michael's father Alan Davidson told *Crimes That Shook Britain* that he was confused as to why his son suddenly had a violent reaction to his intravenous injections and collapsed. Michael recovered, but was very poorly and the medical staff were again extremely worried by his sudden decline.

BELOW A now abandoned part of Grantham and District Hospital



ABOVE A vial of insulin, similar to the type Allitt would have had access to

The results of Paul Crampton's pathology results proved the key to begin to unravel the mystery of the children's collapses. His blood results showed extremely high levels of insulin in some of the samples.

There were still more incidents – nine-month-old Christopher King, admitted for a stomach problem, suffered a seizure, stopped breathing and turned blue. Christopher Peasgood, eight weeks old, was in hospital with breathing problems and was having oxygen treatment. He suffered in the same way as Christopher King.

Then, seven-week-old Patrick Elstone, who had been admitted for an ear infection, was 'found' unconscious by Allitt. Baby Patrick was left with permanent brain damage from the oxygen deprivation.

These three boys survived the attacks by Allitt, but the next baby to come under her care would not. Claire Peck, 15 months old, was admitted to Ward 4 for treatment of asthma symptoms. As staff prepared treatment for the little girl, Allitt was left alone with her. Suddenly, Allitt rushed for help saying that baby Claire had turned blue and couldn't breathe. A nurse managed to bring Claire around and she recovered. Allitt was again left alone with Claire while the doctor went to speak with her parents.

THE SUSPECT IN SCRUBS

The doctors were now convinced there was a staff member who was purposely hurting the children, and Lincolnshire

THE TRUTH HURTS... BUT SO DO LIES

HOW ALLITT'S CONVICTION BROUGHT MUNCHAUSEN SYNDROME INTO THE PUBLIC EYE

The condition was identified in 1951 and named after an 18th Century German baron who used to entertain dinner guests with tales of ridiculously exaggerated heroic deeds. Dr Richard Asher identified the syndrome in 1951 and details of the unusual condition intrigued the medical world: "The most remarkable feature of the syndrome is the apparent senselessness of it... Many of their falsehoods seem to have little point. They lie for the sake of lying."

Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy has been recognised as a form of abuse where a person either fakes or produces illnesses or symptoms in someone else. It is mostly seen in parents harming their children and is now more widely known as 'fabricated or induced illness by carers'.

It was always controversial when it was suggested by expert witnesses that Beverley Allitt would fit the criteria to be diagnosed with both of these disorders. An expert for the prosecution, Dr Roy



ABOVE Sally Clark, pictured following her acquittal.

Meadow, was an eminent paediatrician who had made significant studies into Munchausen Syndrome. Dr Meadow agreed Allitt was "extraordinarily mentally disturbed" and said she had a severe personality disorder that could not be cured. Dr Meadow was later discredited for expert testimony he had given in the case of lawyer Sally Clark, whose two babies died of

unexplained sudden deaths. Ms Clark was found guilty, but in 2003 the conviction was quashed because it was decided that a statistic Dr Meadow stated at the trial – that the chance of two children in an affluent family dying of cot death was "one in 73 million" – was grossly overstated.

Meadow was an often-used trial witness and his "Meadow's Law" theory – that "one sudden infant death is a tragedy, two is suspicious and three is murder, unless proven otherwise" – was used in several trials of mothers whose babies died suddenly, and were jailed.



ABOVE Jo and Christopher Taylor, the parents of seven-week-old victim Liam, attend Nottingham Crown Court in May 1993. Later that month she is found guilty

BELOW Beverly Allitt
leaving court in 1991





“FOR SOMEONE TO BE ARRESTED FOR MURDER IS QUITE HORRENDOUS BUT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING TO HER”

Police Detective Superintendent Stuart Clifton discreetly came to listen to management's concerns.

The case of Paul Crampton was the linchpin for police to launch an inquiry into whether the children were being poisoned by someone at the hospital. More blood samples of the affected children showed insulin levels that were inexplicably high. When officers in the incident investigation team started to plot details like the dates and times that the health emergencies occurred and which staff members were on duty, it became apparent that one nurse's name stuck out.

“The charts showed that on every occasion that there was a child collapsing, Allitt was on duty,” Clifton said. When Allitt, then 23, was arrested, officers were quite shocked at her lack of emotion while being questioned.

Lincolnshire Police's Michelle Billingsley, who was an officer on the investigation, said Allitt was unemotional during the interviews and “gave absolutely nothing away.” The team had to prove that Allitt was the culprit. During a search of Allitt's family home, police found a hypodermic needle and an exercise book called ‘an allocation book’. Police needed more time to build their case, and Allitt was released from custody. However, she was sacked from Grantham Hospital. She would not be allowed on Ward 4 again.

Digging deeper into Allitt's background and some of the evidence they found at her home, police discovered the significance of the allocation book. It was a notebook that she had used to record information about the children on the ward, the type of care they needed and which nurse was allocated with giving that care.

This book became an integral part of the investigation. The team was worried Allitt would find a way to harm another child. The investigation continued for months more, but on 20 November 1991, Allitt was arrested and charged.

BROKEN AND REVEILED

“For someone to be arrested for murder is quite horrendous but it was absolutely nothing to her. No fear, no anxiety.

ABOVE It was in May 1993 that Allitt received 13 life sentences at Nottingham Crown Court



ABOVE Beverly Allitt is currently being detained in Rampton Secure Hospital in Nottinghamshire, and is unlikely to ever be released

Nothing,” Billingsley remembered. Allitt was described as “extraordinarily mentally disturbed” by one of the experts who gave evidence at her trial. She had a history of self harm that dated back to her childhood. As a girl, Allitt was well liked and didn't give her parents much trouble. She was one of four children of shop worker Richard and school cleaner Lillian, and was raised in the village of Corby Glen in Lincolnshire. Neighbours recall that the young Allitt was a keen babysitter who loved small children. They spoke fondly of the girl who had cared for their loved ones, and with horror at the woman she had become.

Allitt liked attention and often turned up at school with bandages around her arms and legs and told her classmates of the stories of accidents she had endured over the weekend. Not many people who knew her then could look back and say with certainty that there was something “not right” about young Beverly, but some friends wondered what was under the bandages and whether the injuries were real.

Allitt was remanded in custody for her own protection. Her alleged offences received national media attention, and news footage at the time of her arrest showed distraught families and angry people hurling abuse and objects at the police van carrying the accused serial killer.

It wasn't just children that Allitt targeted. She was also charged with the attempted murder of two adults. Allitt had worked shifts at a care home for the elderly near Grantham and had been seen injecting a 73-year-old female patient who had diabetes. The woman became unconscious soon after and her blood results showed she had been given an overdose of insulin.

Allitt's trial at Nottingham Crown Court was long, complicated and attracted intense media attention. Allitt was now in the grip of anorexia and had lost an enormous amount of weight. She denied all charges.

Allitt was found guilty of murdering four children – babies Liam Taylor, Becky Phillips and Claire Peck, and 11-year-old Timothy Hardwick.

She was also found guilty of the attempted murders of Paul Crampton, four months, Bradley Gibson, five years, and Becky's twin sister (and Allitt's own godchild) Katie Phillips. Allitt was found not guilty of attempted murder but guilty of causing grievous bodily harm with intent to Kayley Desmond, 14 months, Henry Chan, two years, Christopher King, five weeks, Patrick Elstone, seven weeks, Michael Davidson, six years, and Christopher Peasgood, eight weeks. She was found not guilty of attempting to murder or causing grievous bodily harm to Dorothy Lowe and 15-year-old Jonathan Jobson.

Allitt has spent her sentence, so far, at Rampton Hospital, which is one of three high-security hospitals in England. According to its website, Rampton is split into five areas – mental health, women's services, learning disability, personality disorder and dangerous and severe personality disorder. A 2002 article in *The Telegraph* said “Rampton is home to the dangerous and violent” and that “figures supplied by Rampton show that patients stay there for an average of seven and a half years, but a ‘very small number’ are kept there until they die.” Allitt could be one such ‘lifer’.

The Phillips family never stopped fighting for fair compensation for their surviving twin daughter Katie. In 1999, the Lincolnshire Health Authority awarded Katie, then eight years old, £2.125 million. Allitt had ruined the Phillips' lives and Katie required round-the-clock care for the disabilities that Allitt had caused. Allitt won't be eligible to be considered for release until 2021, and still remains to be one of Britain's most notorious criminals.

TILL DEATH DO US PART

Barbie's Dream Murder

BATTERED BRIDE OR COLD-BLOODED KILLER? THE CONTROVERSIAL CONVICTION OF KARLA HOMOLKA PULLED DOWN THE FAÇADE OF A SEEMINGLY PERFECT MARRIAGE TO REVEAL A STOMACH-CHURNING PATTERN OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND MURDER

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON



KARLA HOMOLKA



PAUL BERNARDO

The faces in the photograph show a gorgeous young bride and her groom, just married. However, a short distance away, the girl who had been murdered by Canada's infamous 'Ken and Barbie' killers had just been found.

The Ken and Barbie killers, or Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo, were so named because both were visually beautiful. They had halos of blonde hair, and eyes as azure as the sea. At their hands lay the sexual assault and murder of three girls, one being Karla's little sister, and the sexual assault or rapes of 19 or more others. The case has an enduring controversy because, while the victims were treated as little more than toys by the pair, there's dispute as to which of them did what, why and to whom.

BARBIE GIRL

Dolls can have a variety of purposes. A happy, young child can project her dreams for the future onto her doll, dressing the little beauty in fabulous clothing and marrying the figure to a 'prince' by sticking a plastic ring in the hole in its hand, as she imagines their romantic future together. Dolls are, however, also given to children in rooms with one-way mirrors in the hope that the child will enact on the doll, and reveal to experts behind the glass how they themselves have been mistreated. But mistreatment doesn't just happen to children, as Karla is unfortunately aware.

Karla was a 17-year-old high schooler when she met Paul. She loved animals and was at a conference for the veterinary centre where she worked part time. He walked in and she

was smitten. Within hours, they were making passionate love in her hotel room. Her heart was his for the taking – even her parents thought he was wonderful.

A 'happy ever after' was, however, far beyond Paul's Ken. He had experienced verbal abuse from his mother and been a voyeur since his teenage years, sneaking looks at his naked neighbours and masturbating outside their windows. By the time he met Karla when he was 23, he had progressed to stalking women through parks and bus stops, grabbing them and placing them in bushes where he could sexually assault them. His attacks became known as those of the Scarborough Rapist. He would play with them, demanding they called him 'King', and would make them repeat over and over again that he could do whatever he wanted to their bodies. His friends recognised a composite sketch issued of the attacker and his DNA was duly taken by the police, but the science was in its infancy and the results would not be returned for a long time.

Karla didn't avoid his manipulations, either. As early as her graduation from high school, she reported to friends that he was being verbally abusive towards her, but tears in mental fabric aren't themselves visible and she let him continue. Her diary shows how she had internalised his tirades as submissive self-loathing, featuring lines such as: 'Remember



Friends recognised a composite sketch issued of the attacker and Paul's DNA was duly taken

2 1/2
MW 18 - 22 YEARS
5'10 - 6'
MED MUSCULAR BUILD
CLEAN SHAVEN
TAN COMPLEXION
LIGHT COLOURED EYES
POSSIBLY BLUE
BLONDE HAIR PARTED
ON LEFT SIDE.
HAIR FEATHERED JUST
OVER TOP OF RIGHT
EAR
CLOTHING:
BABY BLUE NYLON
HIPLength JACKET
TAN COLOURED KNEE
LENGTH WALKING
SHORTS WITH PLEATED
FRONT, RUNNING SHOES
NO SOCKS

394
656
COMPOSITE
90/05/27



“ SHE SUPPLIED THEM BOTH WITH MORE AND MORE GIRLS, AND WOULD EVEN RECORD THEIR ADVENTURES AS HOME MOVIES ”

you are stupid', 'Remember you are ugly' and 'Remember you are fat'. All of these were more reasons why she should chastise herself to 'be a perfect girlfriend for Paul'. There is a photograph of Karla, naked and bound in a gag and handcuffs during a sex game. She is laying on her back with her vagina full frontal to the camera, her nipples to the ceiling and her arms above her head, utterly unguarded. Consensual sado-masochistic sexual play is one thing, but her journal suggests her experience could have been entirely another.

MERRY MOLESTATION... AND MURDER

By Christmas 1990, Paul was happily ensconced in her family home while they waited to move into their own.

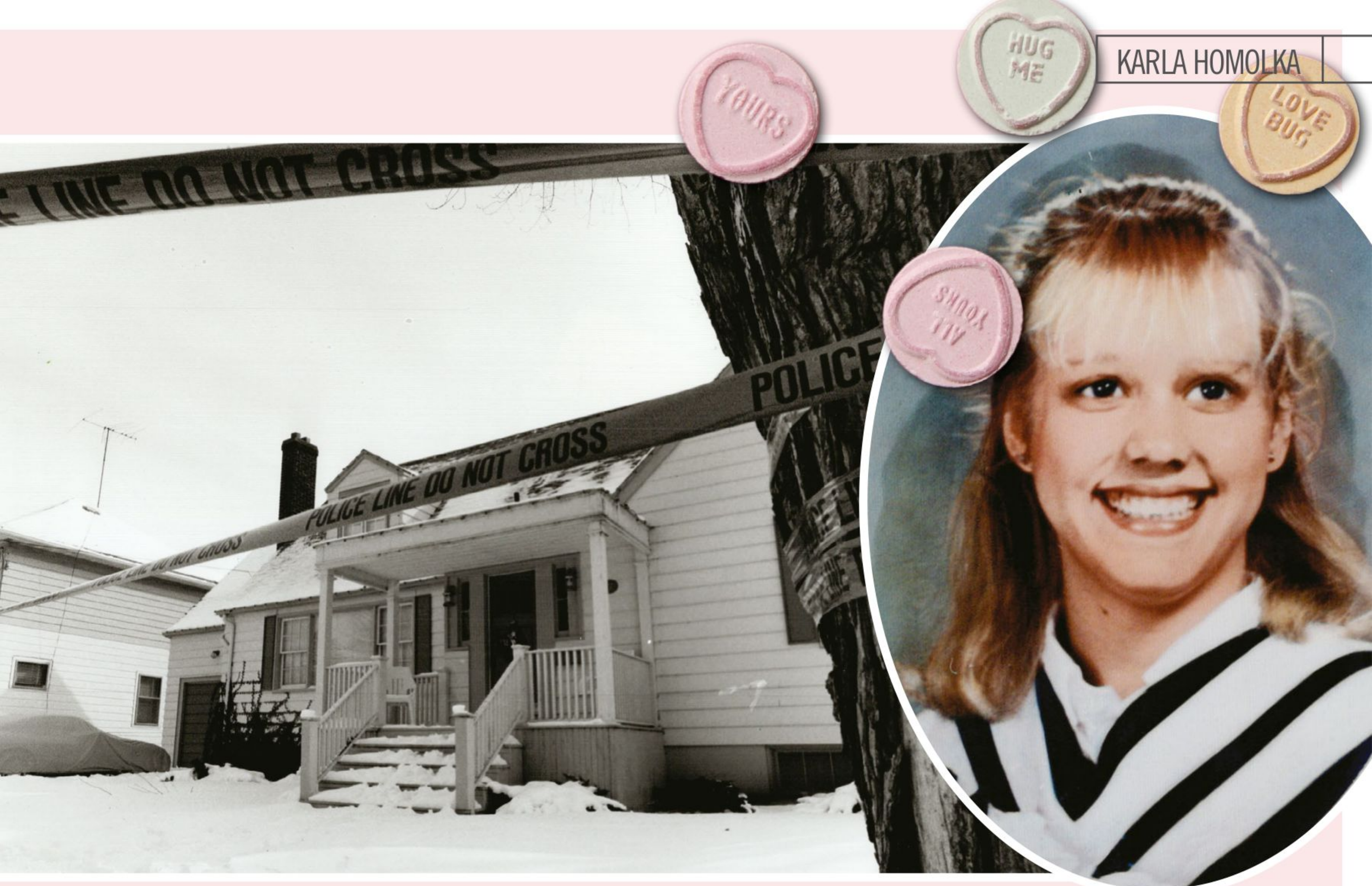
They were due to be married, but the one thing Karla couldn't give him was the small, smooth covering between her legs – her hymen. Paul wanted a virgin, someone pure and 'unbroken'. On the night before Christmas Eve, Karla 'presented' him with her little sister, Tammy. Tammy was drugged (using medication Karla had stolen from work), raped and died in the hospital emergency room. Her death

was ruled a tragic accident. A photo of the duo was buried with her in her coffin.

Paul had now become a true collector and Karla, desperate to keep her Ken happy, became a constant accessory to crime. She supplied them both with more and more girls, and would even record their adventures as home movies. Two more girls became props to their post-Christmas Barbie Dream Murder story: Leslie Mahaffy and Kristen French. Leslie was stolen by Paul on the offer of a cigarette; Kristen was abducted when she got in their car to offer directions. Kristen, once forgotten, was casually dropped into a ditch when the pair tired of her (to be discovered by a man foraging for scrap). Leslie, once beyond the imagination of her captors, was disassembled (for ease of packaging) and parcelled off into the lake, safely bound in cement. It was the discovery of their bodies (especially as Leslie's cement carrier was torn at the seams) that led to the murder investigation.

There has long been concern among experts that if a child plays with their toys in an overtly violent manner, there is cause to monitor their human interactions. Paul, past childhood years though he was, was no exception. His attacks on his Barbie bride intensified from verbal abuse to assault, and in January 1993 Karla visited the emergency room, porcelain skin marred by bruising and ribs broken. She left their home. At the same time, the DNA sample Paul had given two years earlier was finally processed, linking him directly to the case of the Scarborough Rapist. The scene was set for a tête-à-tête between Karla, the police and officers who were working the murder file.

While parts of her body were broken and her 'make-up' was the purple of Paul's pummel-marks, Karla realised that 'the naughty step' loomed. She confessed. Rather, she told



KARLA HOMOLKA

ABOVE Paul Bernardo's house at Port Dalhousie was subject to a meticulous forensic examination following Karla's confession, which turned up evidence of his life as the Scarborough Rapist, too

CIRCLE INSET Their first victim as a couple was Karla's little sister, Tammy Homolka, chosen specifically because she was a virgin and, as Karla's sister, easily manipulated from their position of trust

her family that Paul had manipulated her. Making a murderer doesn't just mean moving someone's hands physically; it can also mean mentally 'puppeting' them. She claimed that Paul's abuse had been ongoing for years; that she suffered battered person syndrome and had been forced to participate. Their home videos, she said, would prove what happened. Only the police couldn't find them.

CANADIAN CONTROVERSY

The police had the bodies and had linked Paul to the Scarborough rapes, but needed Karla's evidence to put him behind bars for murder, as Paul had counter-claimed that (as outlandish as a cute killer doll sounds) the murders had only taken place where the petite 'pretty' was to be found. His defence was that she, not he, was the ultimate monster. What happened next sent shockwaves through the Canadian press and judicial system: Karla agreed to testify for a plea bargain. She would give evidence against Paul and plead guilty to the lesser charge of manslaughter to receive a reduced sentence herself. Journalists, much to their disgruntlement, were barred from reporting the deal.

It was only when Karla was in prison and Paul's trial was in progress that the tapes were finally discovered – the legal team had originally withheld them from evidence to use

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

A FIRST-HAND INSIGHT INTO ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIPS

What is battered person syndrome?

It's a constant feeling of dread and, at worst, a fear for your life if you don't do anything your abuser wants. What they want changes every day, so what is considered acceptable one day results in abuse the next. They belittle and manipulate you, isolate you from others, and control every aspect of your life. It makes you question everything you ever believed about yourself and you will agree to do things even against your will or values.

How does it feel?

It depends how long the abuse has been going on. It is a vicious cycle. The lows are followed by highs and promises that it will never happen again, and those highs become addictive. When you are abused

BIO EMMA JANE AYLING



marriage. She has run a business designing and delivering personal development initiatives for 15 years.

EJ Ayling wrote *Know to Go – Surviving Domestic Abuse* after ending a ten-year abusive

you really can't see it and become adept at covering up and putting on a brave face to the world. It makes you compliant and feel ashamed. You feel that no one will believe you, especially when your abuser has the ability to be exceptionally charming with other people – abusers *can* control their behaviour. You believe that one day they will

change. I carried on with my business, had a very active social life and seemed like a 'normal', happy person. Behind that mask was a miserable and extremely scared woman who feared for her life, waiting for the next explosion.

***24 hour National Domestic Violence Helpline (UK) 0808 2000 247**
National Domestic Violence Hotline (US) 1-800-799-7233



“ SHE WAS SEEN RAPING HER OWN SISTER AND MOLESTING THE OTHERS WITH NO OBVIOUS COERCION FROM THE SUPPOSED CONTROLLER, PAUL ”

at a later date. It turns out that Karla had put the concept of play-acting in a whole new light: the recordings showed that the ‘battered’ blonde moppet clearly enjoyed abusing her own poppets. She was seen raping her own sister and molesting the others with no obvious coercion from the supposed controller, Paul. It appeared that it was no painted smile on her lips but living, obvious relish. FBI profiler Gregg McCrary, who was working on the case, later stated that he thought her to be the more psychopathic of the pair, despite their contradictory psychological test results.

Nevertheless, Karla’s deal was done. The Canadian justice system didn’t allow for the alteration of plea bargains once the sentence had been set, and Barbie remained in jail on her original, secret sentence. Photographs suggest she made quite the playhouse of her time in there, posing in a Wendy house and playfully posturing in the gardens. She was not considered for parole as a result of her offending behaviour.

Karla was released from prison after serving her term. A quietly spoken woman, she gave a number of media interviews to help with her reintegration back into society. She felt that the public had not heard from her directly to judge for themselves that she had reformed after rehabilitation. She admitted to Radio Canada that she had done “terrible things” and said she felt remorse, but stated that at the time of the crimes she felt she was “unable to ask for help” and maintained that she did not “initiate” the

events herself. What is clear is that regardless of her guilt or innocence concerning the murders of her sister and the sexual assault and murders of others is that she is a complex individual. Published documents suggest she was a prisoner loved by some former co-inmates and yet feared by others for her supposed coldness. She denied that romantic letters she wrote to her former prison lover, Lynda Véronneau, were anything of the sort.

Karla moved to various places around Canada and the Caribbean, met a new partner and had children. On the basis of the last few years and persistent doorstepping by the press, these moves may not be her last.

SMILE!

It is impossible to know what truly happened between Karla and Paul, and to the young women who were abused or met their ends at the pairs’ hands. This is because even the video evidence that was eventually uncovered cannot be taken as objective truth of what really went on, because Karla knew she was on camera. If she was indeed a sufferer of battered person syndrome, it is likely that she would have made her ‘performance’ in Paul’s play sessions as convincing as possible in order to please him – her beating meant she eventually had proof that she should fear for her safety at his hands. What’s more, the nature of the illness means that the beliefs



THE PLEA DEAL CONTROVERSY

KARLA CUT A SECRET DEAL FOR A MUCH SHORTER SENTENCE. FOR SOME, THIS TURNED BARBIE INTO A MONSTER

Her plea – guilty of the charges of manslaughter – saw Karla sent to prison where she was kept away from the general prison population for her own safety. She had a larger room and access to a university degree course in Sociology. Karla's plea bargain was used to buy her co-operation to testify against her husband, a rapist whose crimes were proved by DNA evidence. The use of the blonde, beautiful 'battered wife' may have helped to convince the jurors of Paul's misdeeds by creating a narrative that could be construed as a realistic indication of the couple's own turbulent relationship and, by extension, an indicator of how terribly Paul might react to women he was not supposed to love. Paul would be seen as a monster of proportions limited primarily by jurors' imaginations rather than the sketchy facts of the case. As a result, many were outraged when evidence emerged that Karla may not have been coerced into the killings, but plea bargains are sometimes favoured as a feasible means to gain justice, used in complex cases as they save millions in prosecution costs that would be spent to pay judges and lawyers to argue over details. They also safeguard victims' families from having to endure drawn-out trials so they can try to move on with their lives.

TOP Karla leaves court with her lawyer, following her confession and a 'deal with the devil' plea bargain that would secure her a 'lenient' 12-year stretch. She was released in 2005

ABOVE LEFT Paul's case hinged on Karla's testimony: he was charged and convicted of kidnapping, rape and first-degree murder, sentenced to life in prison and given a 'dangerous offender' designation

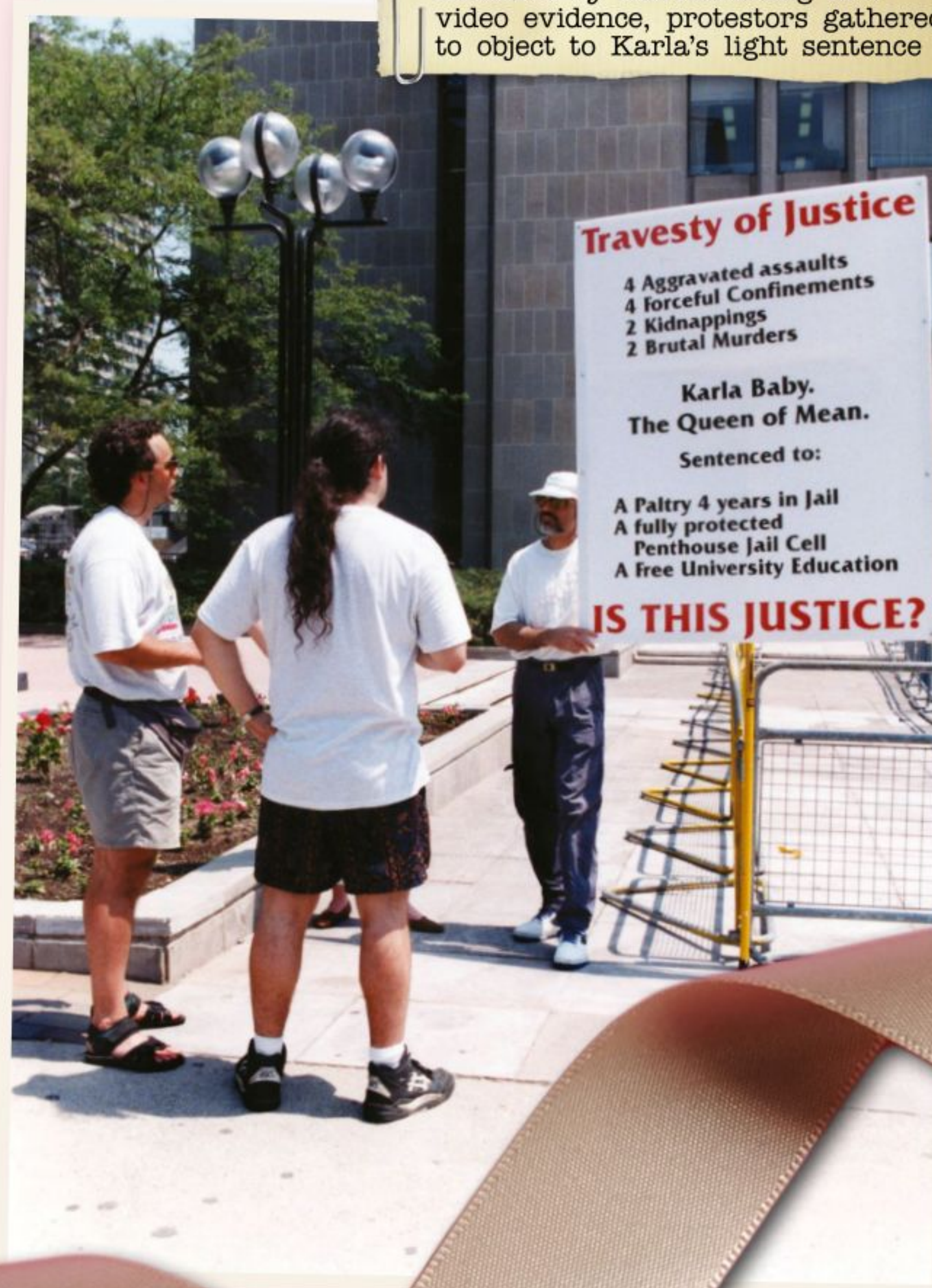
LEFT Deborah and Dan, the parents of victim Leslie, praised the police handling of the case, but slammed the media for breaching their right to privacy and 'victimising' the Mahaffy family

projected onto the abused person by the abuser ensures that the abused person does no less than replace what they know to be reality with the version of the world presented to them by their abuser. They doubt their own senses. This may have meant that Karla at least temporarily believed it was her duty to participate in the crimes because Paul told her to do so. Paul was convicted of murder and remains in prison to this day. He has written about fictional criminal activity and if this is an indicator of his continuing personal character, it is reassuring that he is unlikely ever to be released.

Abuse should never be enshrined within law as a validation for unprovoked, non-defensive violence against others, and Karla has served the time that was within the powers of the Canadian court to give her. Now a grown woman, there are no reports of her committing further criminal acts since leaving prison, and further legislation that could have provided her with a pardon on the basis of her 'lesser' manslaughter conviction has been struck from the books.

The best we can do in future is to make sure that the legal processes our countries have in place will provide appropriate justice for victims and perpetrators. Justice, after all, isn't a fairytale. It mustn't be toyed with.

Incensed by incriminating new video evidence, protestors gathered to object to Karla's light sentence





Call me
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KILLER CALL GIRL

SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, SMART AND HAD A CHARMED CHILDHOOD, SO WHAT MADE ALIX TICHELMAN GIVE A GOOGLE EXECUTIVE A LETHAL DOSE OF HEROIN AND THEN CASUALLY WALK AWAY?

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

Just days before Thanksgiving, on the eve of 22 November 2013, Alix Tichelman and Forrest Hayes stepped on board his luxury yacht, 'Escape'. Hayes was a middle-aged married father of five and a high-ranking Google executive, while Tichelman was an exotic dark-haired hooker, hired for the evening by Hayes. After the pair ducked inside the lavish hideout, they stopped for a quick embrace. They began to talk and laugh, but this story was not fated to have a *Pretty Woman* happy ending.

A short while into their meeting, Tichelman produced an array of drug paraphernalia used for administering heroin. As she cooked up the concoction, Hayes looked on nervously. The 26-year-old call girl then faced her 'sugar daddy' and injected herself with the substance. Feeling

secure in the knowledge the dose was safe, Hayes shone the torch light of his phone onto his arm and the pair searched for a vein to inject.

It didn't take them long to find one, and Tichelman swiftly administered what would be a fatal dose into Hayes' veins. The pair shared a final kiss, and barely seconds later, Hayes clutched at his chest and fell unconscious due to "medical complications".

Tichelman attempted to revive her host by shaking him, but he had gone into a drug-induced cardiac arrest. Did she dial 911? Call out for help? No. Instead, she packed up her equipment, cleaned the sides down and stepped over the dying man to make her way towards the exit. As she left, she stopped to finish the glass of wine that had been prepared



for her earlier, closing the blind on her way. For the next few hours, Hayes' body lay helplessly in B Dock at the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor.

Tichelman's lawyers argued that her decision to leave her client for dead was made in panic, but others were not so convinced. After all, this was not the first time a man had overdosed at the feet of the Killer Call Girl.

SINKING INTO DARKNESS

Tichelman was born into a wealthy upper-class family in Georgia with a mother, father and younger sister. To look at her you would see only a sweet tomboy of a child with a petite blonde bob and a cheeky smile. But Tichelman said her parents found her an "intense" child who showed an interest in horror movies at a very young age.

As she progressed into adulthood, her rebellious ways showed no signs of diminishing. She said during an interview with a fetish magazine in 2012 that she had always been "attracted to a darker side". During her adolescent years she went from experimenting with little white pills to harder substances and fell into hardcore drug abuse. Her parents tried to keep their daughter on the straight and narrow by sending her to high-priced boarding schools designed to straighten out wayward teenagers, one in Georgia and one in Maine, but neither stirred their daughter from her troublesome behaviour.

In 2003, she was carted off to a more stringent programme in Utah. But even here, her rebellious streak could not be tamed. Tichelman would solicit forbidden lesbian trysts in the stairwells and bathrooms, and break the rules. She did not lack education or understanding; the friends she made during her school days describe her as "very smart" and "very deep". She graduated from Georgia State University, having studied journalism.

In 2010, she began to exchange sex for cash, telling friends she was only taking money from men who she was "going to sleep with anyway." Her social media pages were strewn with selfies of the slender beauty in provocative underwear and poses. Tichelman also displayed her body on the poles of strip clubs, performing seductive sequences for ogling customers willing to pay for her attention. Tattoos on her body read, "Hell is Love" and "Till Death Do Us Part," a seemingly ominous foreshadow of what was to come.

Dean Riopelle was a 53-year-old club owner from Atlanta who doted on Tichelman. The pair met while she was working as a fetish model. Riopelle was a member of a rock band called the Impotent Sea Snakes who were known for their shows fuelled by obscene language. The happy couple moved in together at Riopelle's home.

In 2012, the club owner produced a diamond promise ring and it looked as though the twisted Tichelman would get her happily ever after. On her Facebook page she wrote: "Life is great, I am seriously blessed as a motherfucker a great boyfriend, nice house, monkeys, loving family...doesn't get any better than this I don't think."

However, behind this seemingly happy exterior, there were reports of a volatile relationship thanks to Tichelman, who, despite her good looks, would be jealous of other women and would shout at Riopelle's children, accusing them of "getting in between" her and their father.

In September 2013, two months before Hayes' death, her boyfriend was pronounced dead as a result of a lethal overdose. Tichelman claimed she had found him unconscious after getting out of the shower. She

immediately called 911, telling them Riopelle was not responding despite her attempts to revive him. An emergency team was dispatched but Riopelle couldn't be saved. His death was ruled as an accident after the autopsy report showed that he had toxic levels of heroin, alcohol and painkillers in his body.

Khristina Brucker, a former live-in nanny for the club owner, blamed the tension in the household on his girlfriend. Brucker had worked for Riopelle and looked after his children from a previous marriage, but had left the mansion a year before his death. However, she claimed that she had never seen her former employer take drugs or drink excessively. "He was a man who was sceptical of taking aspirin," she claimed.

However, Tichelman's friends have disputed that and claimed that Riopelle drank heavily during their relationship. Nevertheless, his friends were shocked when they learned he had died due to an overdose. Some speculated he had attempted to understand his girlfriend's addiction. Riopelle had wanted to marry Tichelman but found it hard to accept her questionable habits. He told friends that he and Tichelman had picked out her engagement ring and that if she could stay sober for the next 14 months, then the pair would marry on Halloween night. But soon after he disclosed this plan to a friend, he learned that the love of his life was soliciting sex for money to fund her habit. When he discovered this, he was beside himself with rage and threatened to kick her out, instead, though, he hit the bottle and began to drink, just days before his death.

Those who knew Tichelman well said she had truly loved Riopelle and was devastated by his death. She loaded up her black Mustang and went back to her parent's home in the Sacramento suburb of Folsom. While she was there, she met Chad Cornell, a member of a metal band, and the pair fell in love. But Cornell said that the model was a troubled girl. Cornell was aware of his girlfriend's heroin addiction and tried to help her to get clean but it was all in vain. A few months into their relationship, Cornell became aware that his girlfriend was up to something after she would disappear on 'model shoots', later returning without pictures but with a lot of money. He later realised that she was in fact slipping away to meet with clients. He recalled how, when he asked if she was a prostitute, she laughed "like it was the funniest thing she'd ever heard."

On the night of Hayes' death, Tichelman called Cornell in the early hours of the morning. During what he described as a "frantic" phone call, she told him that she had been on a boat party when friends started to do hardcore drugs. She said that as a result she had left the party early because it had made her uncomfortable. The pair dated for several months, but one day when Cornell came out of the shower, he found his girlfriend going through his wallet. He packed her bags and threw her out.

SEEKING ARRANGEMENT

Silicon Valley is well known for its collection of the super wealthy and affluent high-flyers. In 2013, Hayes had moved to a job with Google in their top-secret Santa Cruz office. Hayes had started out working in the automotive industry

RIGHT Santa Cruz Police Chief Deputy Steve Clark told the court that investigators had discovered that following Hayes' death, Tichelman conducted online searches, "On how to defend herself after giving a lethal dose of heroin"



ABOVE During an interview with a fetish magazine, Tichelman described herself as a model, writer and make up artist



Get The Killer Look

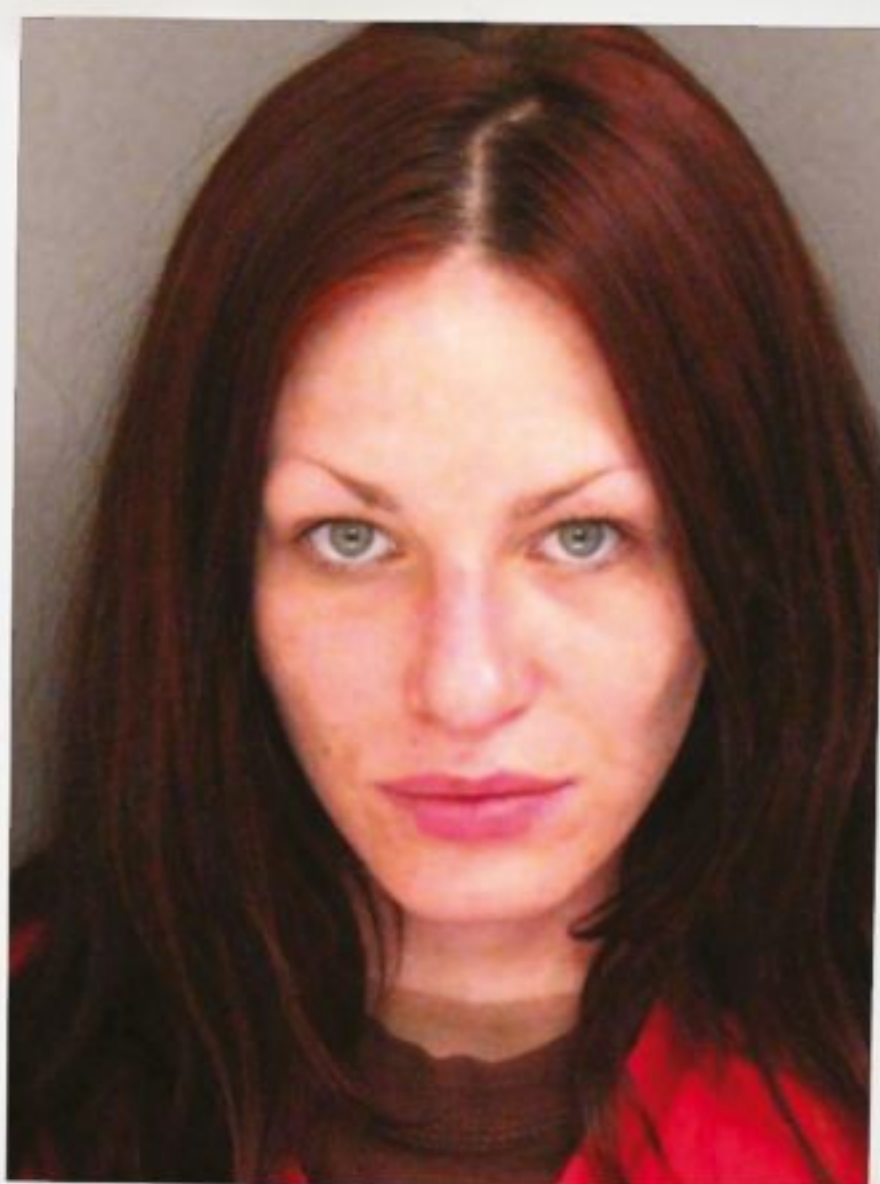
TICHELMAN HEAVILY PROMOTED HERSELF ON ALL HER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

As a millennial with aspirations of being a model, Alix had a heavy social media footprint and had set up web pages dedicated to her shoots. In addition to her 'Seeking Arrangement' profile, she had a Facebook and Twitter account that she posted on frequently and even a make up tutorial on YouTube. Under the alias of AKKennedy, Tichelman posted a seven-minute makeup tutorial video on how to apply a smokey-eye look. The comments section is strewn with anger; one viewer simply comments: "Evil".

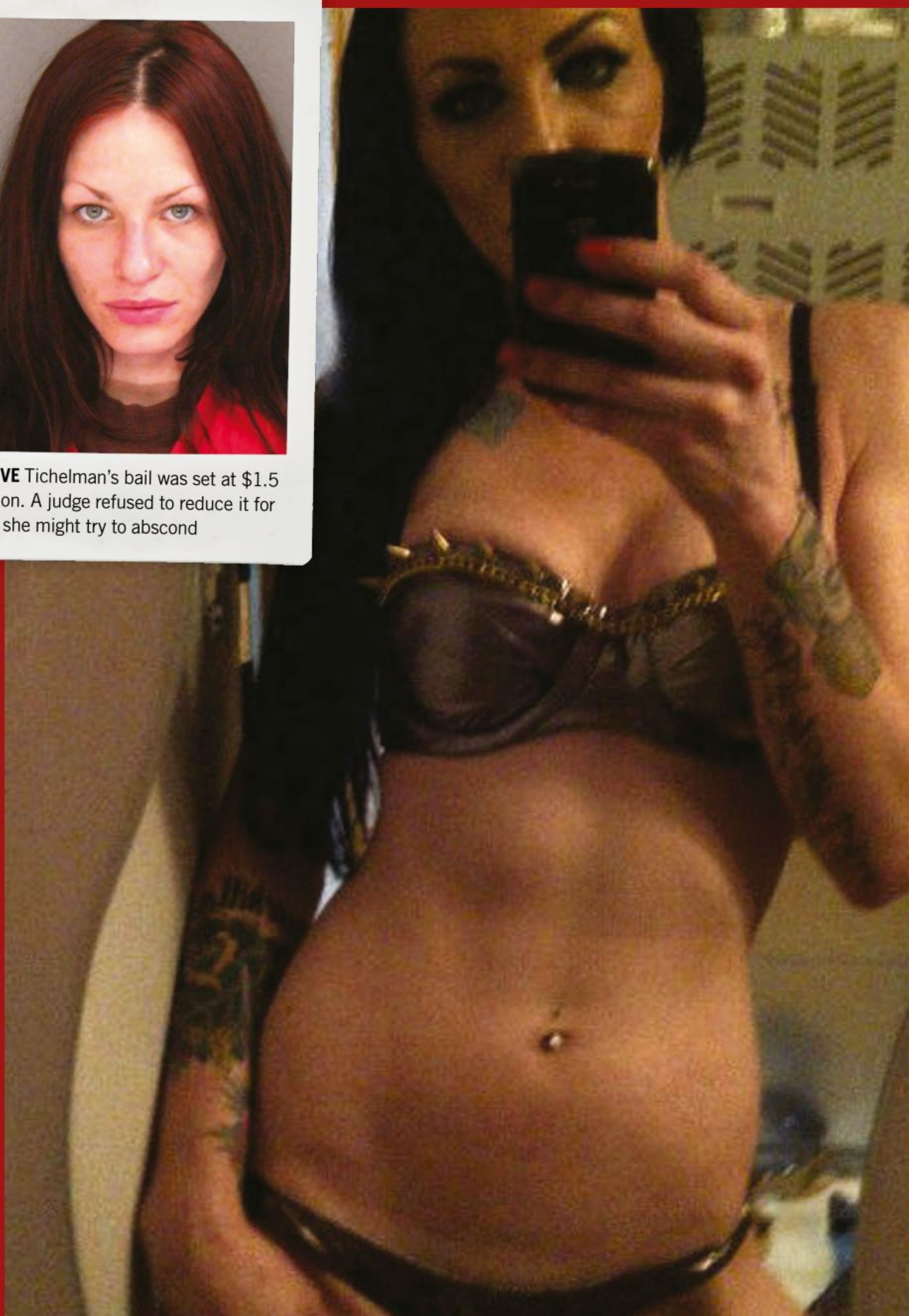
As well as her amateur tutorial, Tichelman also posted a video of Riopelle's monkeys four years ago and expressed her liking of a number of videos, including vlogging sensation Jenna Marbles, a music video for rap artist Iggy Azalea's song *Murda Bizniss* and a National Geographic documentary on heroin. On her personal Facebook page, which has now been taken down, Tichelman wrote: "It's really nice to talk with someone about killing sprees and murdering people in cold blood...and they love it too. No Judgement. Yay!"



ABOVE Judge Timothy Volkman sentenced Tichelman to six years in jail after she pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter



ABOVE Tichelman's bail was set at \$1.5 million. A judge refused to reduce it for fear she might try to abscond



ABOVE Tichelman admitted she was interested in bondage, dominance, sadism and masochism, or BDSM, and would go to clubs with Riopelle wearing a collar and leash

while in native Michigan. Over the years he worked his way up the corporate ladder landing himself a string of senior titles at Apple and Sun Microsystems. He was, at the time of his death, working in Google's 'moonshot factory' projects such as Google Glass and self-driving cars were just some of the ventures developed.

He had been married to his wife Denise for 17 years and lived in a multi-million dollar home in the area. He had bought his boat, which was his pride and joy, and had spared no expense in kitting it out, including an \$8,000 captain's chair and a state-of-the-art security system worth \$200,000 with high-definition cameras. But behind the family-man lifestyle he was perceived to have had, he would also solicit other females. Tichelman was just one of many women he had been seeing in the months before his

death. He had found the exotic dancer-turned-prostitute on a dating website known as 'Seeking Arrangement', where the rich 'invest' in their latest slice. According to police, Tichelman had boasted that she had a client base totalling 200 men, including other lucrative clients from Silicon Valley. By the time of their deadly encounter on 22 November 2013, Tichelman and Hayes were already well acquainted, according to Santa Cruz detectives.

The morning after the party for two on board *Escape*, Hayes' wife was concerned that her husband had failed to make an appearance. She called the boat's captain looking for him. When he searched *Escape*, he found her husband's cold body on the floor.

Police discovered a prominent injection mark on his arm and two used wine glasses at the scene of the crime. "Crime scene 101," Steven Clark told Maureen Maher during an episode of American news show *48 Hours* on ABC, "someone else has been there."

Police immediately targeted Hayes' phone to look for clues as to who he had arranged to meet that night. They quickly established that Hayes had a profile set up on the 'Seeking Arrangements' website and that he had been speaking with Tichelman. They also began to look into the video footage on board *Escape*, but were told by the ship's captain, who worked for a number of wealthy clients, that the surveillance camera at the scene did not work.

It took police three months to figure out that this was a lie, and the camera had captured the whole of the deadly meeting. The footage had been stored on a remote server in a media cloud. The police spoke with the media company that had set the camera up and managed to secure the footage. When they watched the ordeal unfold in front of them, they were shocked to discover that Hayes' death was a possible murder investigation.

They watched Hayes clutch his chest in distress and slump over onto the cabin floor. Those who have seen the video claimed that for seven minutes, as Hayes suffered mercilessly from the effects of the heroin, his dark-haired, heavily tattooed guest made little effort to save his life. They watched on as the only person who could have called for help strolled out the door without so much as a backwards glance. Hayes' obituary in the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* read: "Forrest will be remembered above all as a loving husband and father. More than anything else he enjoyed spending time with his family at home and on his boat. His brilliant mind, contagious smile, and warm embrace will be missed and cherished in memories by his friends and family."

ESCAPE

Police studied the shocking footage in an attempt to discern the identity of Hayes' guest. They compared the girl on the video to his list of online companions. Tichelman's distinctive tattoos and dark hair made it easy for police to match her to a profile on 'Seeking Arrangement'. However, it would be months before police managed to capture and question her. The founder of 'Seeking Arrangement' told *48 Hours* that although Tichelman's profile had been approved, it was unknown to the company that she was using it as a platform to advertise her prostitution.

Months after she had left the Google executive to die, Tichelman contacted Cornell and told him she was planning on moving back to Atlanta. She attempted to meet up with him one last time. Cornell was surprised to see that his ex-girlfriend appeared to have thawed out after their breakup.

“AS HAYES SUFFERED MERCILESSLY, HIS DARK-HAIRED, HEAVILY TATTOOED GUEST MADE LITTLE EFFORT TO SAVE HIS LIFE”

BRAIN

As the user falls asleep or loses consciousness, the respiratory system may shut down due to the body's extreme relaxed state. The user can stop breathing as a result.

HEART

Heart failure, induced by a drop in blood pressure, can stop the heart completely. Death follows swiftly without medical intervention. Tachycardia, an irregular heart rate and rhythm, can cause an insufficient blood supply to the brain and other vital organs as the body attempts to distribute its scarce and irregular blood supply.

LUNGS

Pulmonary oedema – an accumulation of fluid in the lungs, particularly in the air sacks – can lead to the inability to breathe and/or kidney failure as the lungs lose their ability to exchange vital gases.

STOMACH

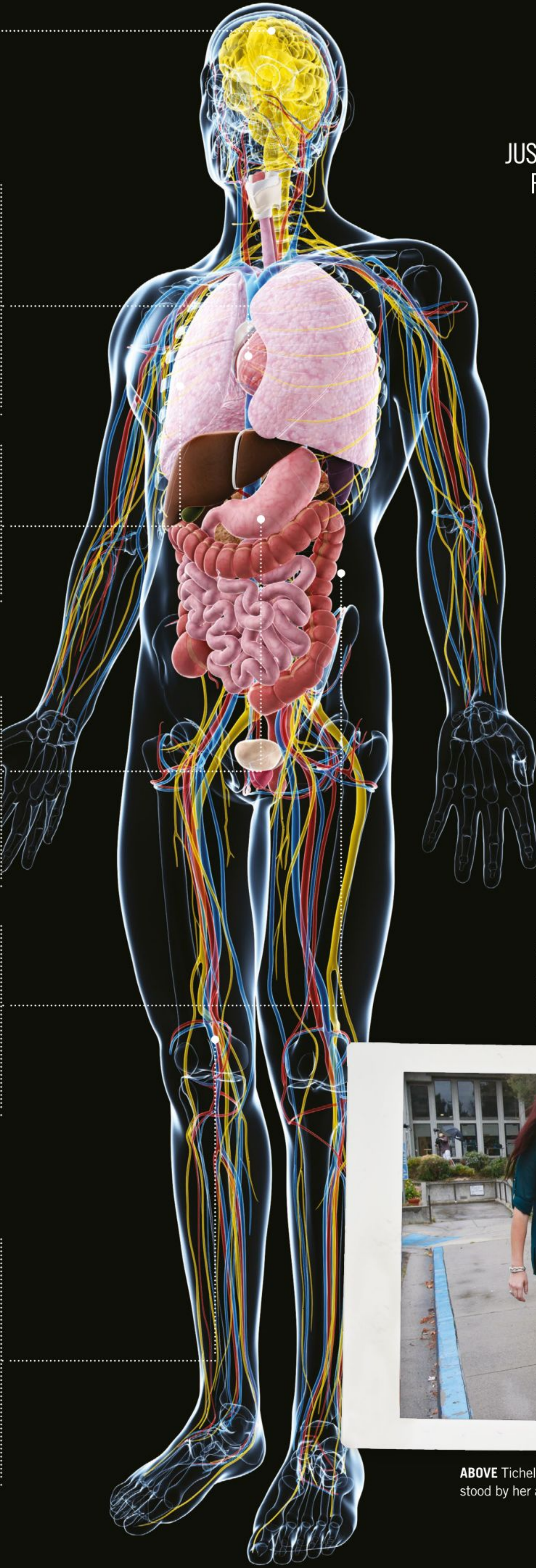
Heroin is an extremely powerful drug and too much of it can even make a hardened user sick. If this happens when they're asleep or unconscious, which commonly happens to someone who's just ingested heroin, they can choke and drown in their own vomit.

KIDNEYS

Studies have shown that the use of heroin has been associated with high levels of protein in the urine. As a result, the kidneys may be exposed to bacteria or viral contaminants in heroin, or toxins in the substance used to dilute the drug that lead to kidney failure.

BLOOD

As a result of the drug, blood pressure drops significantly. This can lead to heart failure as the organ fails to receive enough oxygen. If bacteria enters the bloodstream via the site of the injection, it can travel straight to the heart and may cause an infection of its inner lining known as endocarditis, causing inflammation and damage to the heart's valves.



When Heroin Kills

JUST ONE INJECTION OF HEROIN CAN HAVE FATAL CONSEQUENCES. HERE'S HOW AN OVERDOSE AFFECTS THE HUMAN BODY

Heroin is an opium drug derived from morphine, a medicine used to relieve pain from medical procedures. On the street, it is typically sold as a white or brownish powder that is cut with sugars, starch, powdered milk or quinine. In its purest form, heroin is a white powder with a bitter taste that is commonly produced in South America and south-east Asia. Brown heroin can be smoked or snorted as opposed to injected. Black tar heroin is sticky like roofing tar or hard like coal and is mass-produced in Mexico.

Impure heroin is usually dissolved and diluted before being injected into veins, muscles, or under the skin. Users typically experience a high when the opium-based substance blocks pain receptors in the brain, leaving the user with a euphoric feeling of relaxation and a decreased feeling of pain.

Once hooked, the user can experience some horrific withdrawal symptoms if they can't get their next fix within about a day. These include severe anxiety, depression, diarrhoea, vomiting, cramps, chills and more, typically lasting between 24 and 72 hours. Heroin relaxes the user because it is a depressant that slows messages travelling between the brain and the body. In overdose cases, the user can forget to breathe as it shuts down the respiratory system. Many users die when they relapse after a period of abstinence, administering a dose that their body is unable to handle as it would have previously.

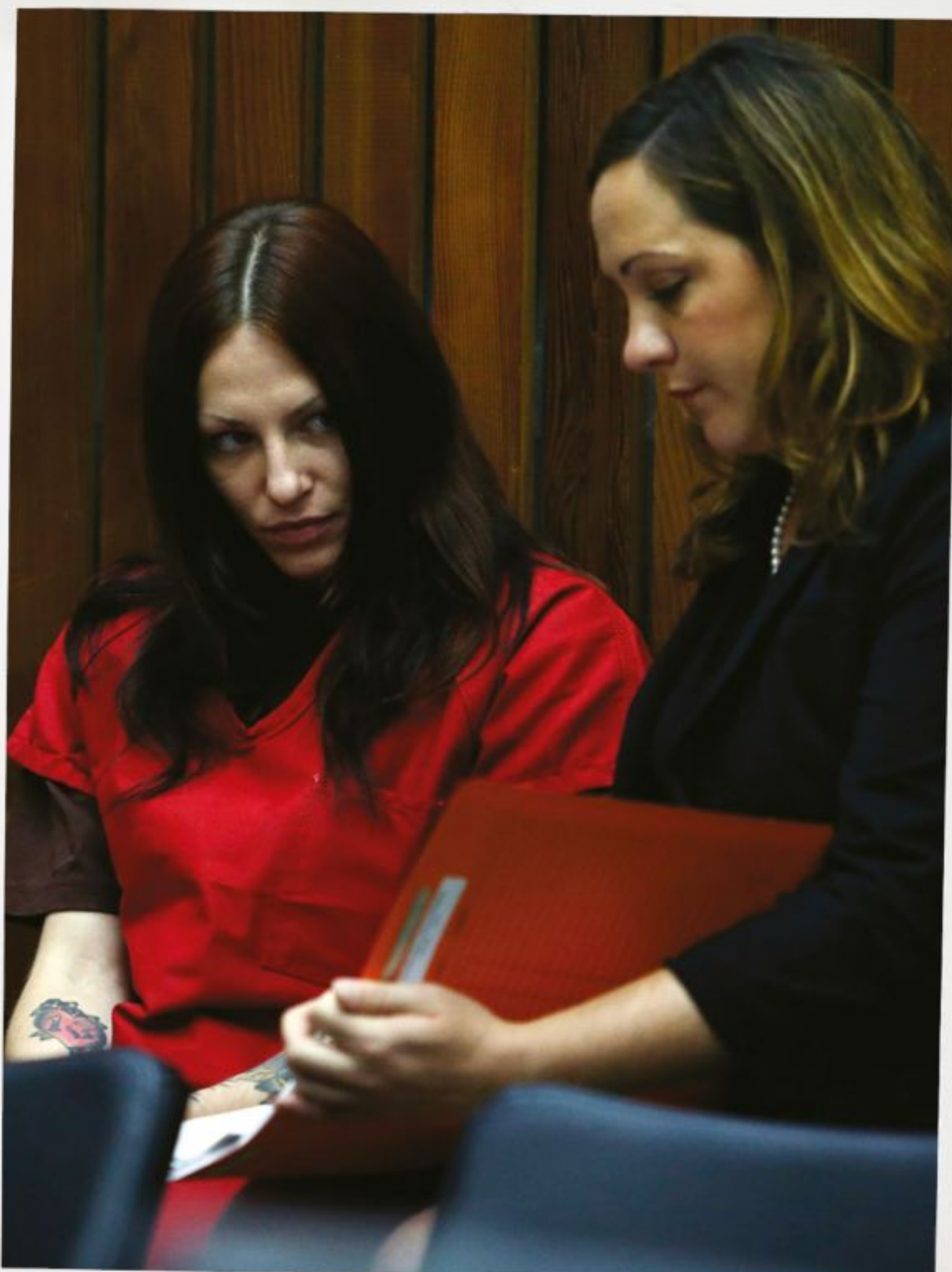
In the last five years, the number of people in the US who have died from a heroin overdose has almost quadrupled (approximately 11,000) compared to a five-year period that ended in 2010 (more than 3,000), with men accounting for the vast majority of deaths.



ABOVE Tichelman's sister Monica (left), mother Leslieann and father Bart stood by her as she faced manslaughter charges



RIGHT After Tichelman's arrest, the media dubbed her the 'Harbor Hooker' and 'Call Girl Killer'



ABOVE After her arrest for Hayes' death, Tichelman initially pleaded not guilty to voluntary manslaughter



He claimed that when their relationship had ended, she had reacted badly to the news and made a number of callous remarks towards him. But at the time of their reconnecting, she appeared friendly and sincere. The pair discussed her plans to move across state lines. But a broke Tichelman needed one last encounter with a rich stranger to be able to afford the moving costs.

Unknown to her, the police were in the process of setting an irresistible trap. Undercover cops had seen on her social media profiles that she was planning to leave the state and the fear that they might miss the opportunity to arrest her set in. They set up a fake profile on the dating website where she and Hayes had met. The ‘customer’, who went by the alias of Sebastian, struck up a conversation with her and requested that she meet them at a Santa Cruz hotel. ‘Sebastian’ was willing to pay for the privilege and deposited several hundred dollars into her account, with the promise of more when she met him.

Tichelman initially mocked her customer, calling them a “cheapskate” and telling them that some men were willing to pay “double that”. Nevertheless it would be enough to get her home, so on 4 July, Tichelman left the safe haven of her parent’s home in Folsom where she was hunkering down and walked into the hotel expecting to meet her latest meal ticket. Instead, she was arrested by Santa Cruz police, who

“A BROKE TICHELMAN NEEDED ONE LAST ENCOUNTER WITH A RICH STRANGER TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD THE MOVING COSTS”



discovered a loaded heroin needle in her bag. When she realised she had been busted, she burst into tears.

ADMINISTERING JUSTICE

When asked by the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* if the overdose was accidental or intentional, Santa Cruz Police Chief Deputy Steve Clark, who had been on the case since day one, said the evidence showed a “level of guilt” that reached second-degree murder rather than involuntary manslaughter.

Tichelman’s trial took place in Santa Cruz in May 2015, several months after Hayes’ death. Outside the courtroom, Tichelman’s public defender Athena Reis said: “Everything we’ve reviewed confirms that Forrest Hayes wanted to do heroin that night, and that he died as a result of an accidental overdose. Both Ms Tichelman and Mr Hayes expected nothing more than pleasure from their consensual and mutual drug use.”

Her defence attorney Larry Biggam argued that his client had no reason to kill Hayes as he was a long-term source of viable income to her, and that by killing him she would be worse off than if he were alive. But back inside the building, Tichelman pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter and administering drugs. She also pleaded guilty to misdemeanour prostitution, possessing drugs, and destroying or concealing evidence.

A Superior Judge sentenced Alix Tichelman to six years in jail for her crimes. However, it was agreed by the judge that she would serve her time in the Santa Cruz County Jail, and that she would be credited the year she had already served. At the end of her sentencing, she apologised to the Hayes family via her defence team for the hurt and destruction that she had caused by her actions, telling them what happened was an accident and that she had not meant to hurt anyone.

Biggam called the death of the Google executive an, “Accidental overdose between two consenting adults.” Santa Cruz Deputy District Attorney Rafael Vazquez told the media that the charges against Tichelman were filed despite clear objections from the Hayes’ family, who feared that such a public trial would further embarrass his wife and children who had been left traumatised by exposure of the Google executive’s double life. “They just wanted this to go away,” Vazquez said. “But we had a duty to pursue the case.” Vazquez said none of Hayes’ family attended the hearing but an attorney representing them did.

Since the trial, the Hayes family has stayed out of the limelight and have moved to a different state. Tichelman’s family has stood by her throughout her incarceration, but refused to speak to the media. She is expected to be released in July 2017.

Charges have never been filed over Riopelle’s death in 2013, which was ruled as an accident. However, given the similarities of the two deaths, police have opened it up for investigation once again. Milton police compared notes and files with police in California, and saw possible similarities in the two deaths. Milton Police are currently, “Going back through the case, making sure that nothing was missed, making sure that there was no foul play involved.”

LEFT In preparing for trial, Tichelman’s attorneys Athena Reis (left) and Larry Biggam (right) told the media that their client had no motive for the murder of Forrest Hayes. However, she went on to enter a guilty plea on several charges including involuntary manslaughter





LESBIAN VAMPIRE KILLER

AS THE SMOKE CURLED FROM HER CIGARETTE, TRACEY WIGGINTON WATCHED THE MAN SHE'D CUT UP DIE, SLOWLY LICKING THE TASTE OF HIS IRON BLOOD FROM THE POINTS OF HER TEETH... OR DID SHE?

WORDS DR CHARLIE OUGHTON

In days when people believe in gods and the practice of witchcraft is part of belief systems shared by many and protected by law in some countries, is it possible that vampires exist? This was the question concerning the trial of the so-called Lesbian Vampire Killers. Led by Tracey Wigginton, the four women were accused of conspiring in the murder of Edward Baldock in Brisbane, Australia on 20 October 1989. It was alleged that Tracey convinced Lisa Ptaschinski, Kim Jervis and Tracey Waugh that she, Tracey Wigginton, was a vampire who must ingest blood to exist. She also apparently had the power to control minds for good measure. Was she a vampire? Did her friends believe she was a vampire and, frankly, what impact did this have on how the murder was perceived?

FANGS AND ROMANCE

Vampires, if you go by the movies, are generally dudes or dishy ladies with pointed teeth who don't do well in sunlight. With roots in Gothic writer Bram Stoker's tale of *Dracula* and inspired by historic warlords, they are considered supernatural. They have heightened senses, live on blood and are supposed to be devastatingly alluring, as Tracey and her acquaintances found out.

Dust from the Brisbane road glittered in golden diamond spikes hurled up by little gusts of wind at the roadside bar. Inside, four women raised champagne glasses in a toast to death itself, slowly licking the sweet nectar from their thirsty lips. They had brought their knives and were prepared.

The apparent leader was tall and sturdy; she seemed to loom over them. Her drop-jawed high guffaw, complete with a spray of acne (visible in photographs from the time)

LEFT A small bundle of cloth shields Baldock's body from the blithely balmy glade as crime investigators catalogue the scene

may have seemed more like bared teeth and gaping maw with a Hammer-horror style splash of blood on her chin for good measure. Though the women had only known her a short time and Lisa had only been her lover for two weeks, they supported her and she needed to feed. The four figures gathered into their carriage and scuttled across the roads of Brisbane, hunting through the parks for lone figures they could overcome.

On this occasion, however, the watch-lords of the night did not proffer. There was neither snivelling minion nor cowering damsel to pounce on. It was a drag. They were in danger of turning back into a group of bored girls in a motor, squinting for magic through the mozzie clouds of Kangaroo Point with the car's engine reminding them how very real the world outside of their heads actually was.

Edward Baldock fell victim to their determination to live out their fantasy. They found him hanging off a lamp post. He'd had a few drinks and was, as the locals say, shickered. A happy chap with a wife, a flock of children and a job at the council, he'd been having the time of his life playing darts with his mates and was waiting for a taxi home. When a car full of apparently friendly, frolicky young ladies offered him a ride, well, why wouldn't he? He was driven to his doom with Prince's *Batdance* playing on the stereo. After penetrating his body with the blade of a knife given to her by Lisa, Tracey watched him bleed to death.

The murder was uncovered not by a hue and cry to follow a flighting fiend into the bush, but because Baldock's body was found with a bank card in his shoe marked in the name of one T A Wigginton. The knives used to kill the man had been roughly cleaned and were recovered from accomplice Kim's kitchen, searched after Wigginton was interviewed by the police.

THE LADY IS A VAMP?

In everyday circumstances, someone in a cape announcing themselves sire of 'Drac' would be met with derision (or perhaps the invitation to make like a bat and flap off) but acolytes – people who believe in you – make all the difference. It is possible that Tracey's friends did believe that Tracey was a vampire. This is because, as Professor Mark Griffiths has commented, vampires exist. It's a case of definition and he has studied them for years. Unlike Hollywood's supernatural scoundrels, they are simply people who drink, or are aroused by, blood. It's really no different to people who are stimulated by the idea of semen and porn's notional money shot. It's just bodily fluid, and Tracey was said to buy it from the butcher.

Supernaturally speaking, Tracey and the girls were part of the Australian Gothic Swampie culture and had a shared interest in the witchcraft and occult – the so-called 'Satanism' spat out by the case's press clippings. One detective noted with some derision that Kim had a "montage of photos of various cemeteries" and that "the group appeared preoccupied with death". Lisa and the other accomplices may have found hanging out with the charismatic Tracey a powerful mental – you might say psychic – stimulus. After all, if your leader's going to claim to be able to do things, sooner or later they're going to have to prove it. Even doing something slightly out of the ordinary seemed proof enough, and Lisa said that she had already cut herself to provide the blood and that Wigginton had happily taken her fill. The sheer force of Wigginton's self-belief may have made it harder for the other girls not to comply with her requests



ABOVE The park next to the Brisbane River at West End, Brisbane, where Edward Baldock was taken by Wigginton and murdered

and they may have considered her force supernatural as a result – Lisa later said Wigginton could read her mind. Faced with the difference between a mind-controlling, violent blood-drinker and an overbearing blood-fetishist prepared to commit violence, the distinction of what makes a vampire may have seemed muddy to the friends indeed.

Lisa was also impressionable. She had a history of drug overdoses and would purposely harm herself as a physical outlet for her poor mental health. In the five years before the murder, she'd been hospitalised 82 times. That she told a court psychiatrist, "She, Tracey, dominated me more than anyone has in my life," says a lot. Notice that she didn't simply state how much she was dominated, but that Wigginton dominated her "more" than "anyone else", suggesting her submissiveness in relationships was frequent. Cutting yourself during intimacy has been discussed by sex educators as potentially healthy when the person being cut controls the situation, but Lisa's testimony suggested that she was providing the blood because she felt like she had to. Whether or not all the accomplices participated in the murder because they felt they had no choice was to be a key part of the prosecution.

SEE NO EVIL

The alleged accomplices stated in court that they hadn't believed that Wigginton would commit the crime and were



Dapper with an easy grin and notable lack of worry-lines despite his age, Edward Baldock was the council worker Wigginton murdered

5 MINDS, MEMORIES AND MURDER

WIGGINTON'S VIOLENCE WAS BLAMED ON HER NOT-SO WILFUL RESPONSE TO ABUSE – THE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTIPLE PERSONALITY DISORDER

Wigginton, aged 24 at the time of the murder, was diagnosed with Multiple Personality Disorder and was said to have five different personas. One was Bobby, a butch, man-hating lesbian that protected the other personalities of Tracey as a child, an insecure adult and an impassive witness to her life. Bobby was the murderer, but why? Tracey said she had suffered a traumatic background including being raped by her grandfather and beaten by a harridan grandmother. In a bizarre switch of Albert Bandura's Bobo doll experiment, Bobby butchered Baldock as revenge for the abuse Tracey had suffered. Bandura had found that children learned aggression by copying and would attack the Bobo dolls after witnessing violence, literally play acting their emotions out in a context they considered socially appropriate. The fantasy of Baldock as the stand-in for her abusers and of Bobby as her own double allowed Tracey to see the crime in an emotionless way. She later told journalist Ella Riggert: "Once I started I couldn't stop. I couldn't see Mr Baldock – I kept seeing my grandmother, my grandfather, my mother, my father and all the people in my life who had hurt me".

caught off guard when she did. They also said they were brainwashed. You could see why – newspapers reported that the court heard that Wigginton avoided sunlight and mirrors and boasted of being able to "make people disappear except for their eyes," to use Lisa's phrase. This would sound far-fetched coming from a child, let alone an adult. It's almost too daft to laugh at.

But what of Wigginton? It is one thing to believe a fantasy in the privacy of your head, but it's quite another when folks take what you're saying seriously. It could even suggest that the fantasy is not in itself beyond belief and may, therefore, be within the realm of the possible. You'd want to believe your own hype.

"The shell of a volcano", all non-human unstoppable force, was how Wigginton described herself after the murder. She went on: "You think nothing. Nothing goes through your mind. There is no emotion, just blind fury". Ridding the body of emotion is perhaps seen here as allowing the body to become pure force, some part of the cycle of birth and death beyond individuality. Wigginton said, "I can still smell the river – it was really salty smelling – the smell of blood,

“NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT THE COURT HEARD THAT WIGGINTON AVOIDED SUNLIGHT AND MIRRORS”

VAMPING IT UP?

AS WIGGINTON ALLEGEDLY CLAIMED TO BE A BLOOD-SUCKER, WE SPEAK TO PROFESSOR MARK GRIFFITHS ABOUT VAMPIRE FACT AND FICTION

What is vampire fetishism?

Sexual arousal, pleasure and excitement from the act of drawing blood from a living object (typically human, but [it] could be an animal). There are overlaps with sexual cannibalism (in which blood is consumed but the sexual focus is the eating of human flesh). Other related conditions have been documented, such as odaxelagnia (deriving sexual pleasure from biting), haematolagnia (deriving sexual satisfaction from the drinking of blood), and haematophilia (deriving sexual satisfaction from blood in general), and auto-haemofetishism (for example, deriving sexual pleasure from sight of blood drawn into a syringe during intravenous drug practice).

What causes it?

Vampirism is rarely a single clinical condition, and may or may not be associated with other psychiatric and/or psychological disorders (e.g., severe psychopathy, schizophrenia, hysteria, and mental retardation). There are also cases where pre-existing medical conditions (such as anaemia) may be a factor. However, among consenting adults, it is not a mental illness at all, just a non-normative sexual preference. Furthermore, it may or may not necessarily include sexual arousal. Only vampire fetishism would include sexual arousal.

How does real-life vampire fetishism compare to the images of vampires that we see in popular culture?

Vampire fetishism and vampirism are two different things because some individuals consume their own blood or others' without any sexual connotation whatsoever. Most people's perceptions of vampires arise out of films and books, so their view of vampires are likely to feature humanoid beings with fangs that bite into the necks of unwilling victims and suck out their blood. The motivation to drink blood in most fictional portrayals of vampires are non-sexual (although the victims may be attractive women). Real life cases of humans with vampirism are unlikely to have fangs and the blood may be drunk from a receptacle rather than the person direct. There is little crossover between vampires in popular culture and those that have the condition in real life.



BIO MARK GRIFFITHS

Professor Griffiths has researched behavioural addiction for over 30 years. He has published five books, 150 book chapters, and more than 650 research papers on topics including gambling, video gaming, sex and cyberpsychology. His research has won 18 national and international awards.

the smell of metal that had been left to rust in the rain". All seeing. All feeling. The emphasis on smell calls to mind the human-animal hybrid that features in so many of the *Dracula* retellings. It suggests being apart from human civilisation trapped in our jobs and cars. It suggests the potential to escape both danger and judgement. It suggests that the evocative imagery both here and in the greats of Gothic literature hints that if escape is possible, urges should be obeyed even though they eschew morality and logic.

This may not just be the view of a few eccentrics but indicates how the trial unsettled Australian society. If we believe in God, the Devil or any other unseen forces, may we not also want to believe in our own potential super-nature? Ron Hicks' book *Inside The Mind Of The Vampire* asks whether Tracey was "the first vampire for 300 years – or the first ever?" While this is obviously partly a sales pitch, was this seen as something we could actually become? The police themselves were sure that she had drunk from the crater she had created in her victim's body. As horrifying a thought as it is, some may want to believe that humans could become monsters if we commit the unthinkable. The press, paradoxically, seemed to will Tracey on in her self-belief as well as chastise her.

ESCAPE FROM TRAIL

The physical evidence against Tracey and witness statements of her friends was damning, though she denied all the blood-drinking and other activities of which she had been accused. What's more, she was evaluated as having Multiple Personality Disorder while under investigation. Her psychiatrists persuaded the court to allow her to appear in absentia owing to the trauma they felt the experience could cause her. As she had little memory of the murder, the medical team even suggested one of her alternate personalities planted her bank card in Baldock's shoe to set her primary identity up for arrest in the first place.

Tracey was nevertheless declared fit to plead. Her MPD diagnosis was seen not as a sign of insanity but as a mechanism she had developed to help her cope with childhood abuse. It was even discussed by academic Belinda Morrissey as being a chance to see Wigginton with sympathy as the justice system had failed to protect her. That said, sympathy does not safeguard citizens from being stabbed so many times that they are nearly decapitated, head held on only by the spinal cord, as Baldock's was. Tracey was sentenced to life in prison.

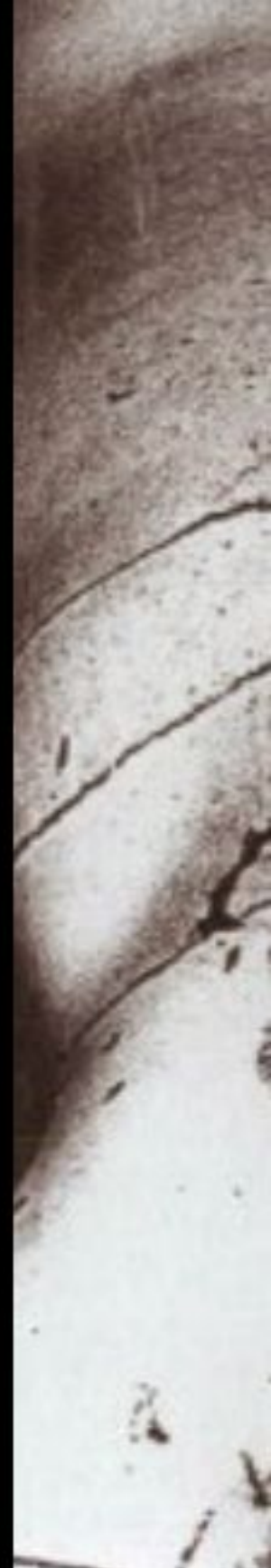
MANNERS, MORALS, MODERNITY

Lisa Ptaschinski was jailed for life for murder and Kim Jervis for manslaughter as she had acted as bait for the victim. Tracey Waugh was a little different. She was noted in documentaries very differently to the other 'Lesbian Vampire Killers' during the trial. While there was never any suggestion that Waugh participated in the actual murder, she was involved in the planning and was in the car when Baldock was taken. She didn't try to stop the crime. Crown Prosecutor Adrian Gundelach stated that during the trial,

“ THE TRIAL SEEMED MORE ABOUT PASSING JUDGEMENT ON PEOPLE WHOSE LOOKS AND BELIEFS WERE DIFFERENT TO THE NORM ”

RIGHT Tracey Wigginton left her victim to die, a mass of blooded hair, grapple marks and a distressed shirt cuff

MUGSHOTS Wigginton and Ptaschinski were convicted of murder, Jervis was convicted of manslaughter. Waugh (lower left) was cleared of all charges





she wore “a pretty frock and her [long] hair done neatly. She looked young”, a smile on his face in apparent approval. Waugh was complying with social norms by looking feminine and innocent in court. She was acquitted and walked free. The trial, as those screaming “Lesbian Vampire Killers” headlines suggested, seemed more about passing judgement on people whose looks and beliefs were different to the traditional norm. It seemed more about guarding against a representation of ‘evil’ than it was about getting justice for the dead man himself.

Tracey Wigginton and her accomplices have all since been released from prison, Tracey with 31 parole conditions. Perhaps the sole truth about the case was, in the end, uttered by Tracey herself. It is poetic in its simplicity and warning: “Murder is a terrifying experience – it’s extremely scary to have that much power. It’s playing God with life and death. Nobody should have that sort of power . . . but we all do.” If you believe that human life is sacred, it’s a power that should never be used.



ABOVE Released from prison, Tracey's youthful style contrasts with her crutches. She was freed from the bars but her actions ensure constant scrutiny

© Alamy; Shutterstock

NANNY FROM HELL

MARINA AND KEVIN KRIM THOUGHT THAT THEIR CHILDREN WERE IN SAFE HANDS WITH YOSELYN ORTEGA. THEY HAD NO IDEA THAT THE MOUNTING TENSIONS BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR NANNY WAS PUTTING THEIR BABIES IN TERRIBLE DANGER

WORDS **TANITA MATTHEWS**

It was approximately 5.30pm when mother-of-three Marina Krim returned to her apartment on West 75th Street on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, with her three-year-old daughter trailing behind her. Barely a week before Halloween 2012, the leaves on the trees outside had begun to turn from shades of fresh green to vibrant blood orange and red – a chilling metaphor for the events that had unfolded that afternoon behind the doors of the Krims' La Rochelle apartment. Within minutes of her arrival, Marina raced back to the building lobby with her three-year-old child in her arms, screaming for help, tears streaming down her face. "My babysitter killed my kids!" she screamed, referring to the nanny she had employed and entrusted with her children for the last two years, Yoselyn Ortega. That afternoon she was supposed to be looking after Marina's two-year-old son Leo and her six-year-old daughter Lucia, who they fondly called 'Lulu'. Instead Ortega had committed the unthinkable.

The scenes inside the Krim family home were recalled in court five years later, as attorneys for the defendant argued their client could not be held responsible on the grounds of mental illness. However, prosecutors argued that the child-sitter, originally from the Dominican Republic, had planned the malevolent attack on the children, which was intended to be a





Leo (left) and Lulu (right). Their nanny, Yoselyn Ortega, stabbed and slashed them to death inside their home on 25 October 2012



final act of revenge against their mother. She was depressed, not mentally ill, they claimed, and knew right from wrong when she killed the children, carrying out the crime at a moment when their parents would be unable to save them. Jurors were tasked with determining a child slayer's sanity. Ortega's actions were not those of a rational or right-thinking person, but were they the actions of an insane one?

HER DEMONS

To understand the crime, it is first important to understand the criminal. Born in Santiago de los Caballeros in the

Although the Dominican Republic's mental health services have made important strides since the turn of the millennium, when Yoselyn Ortega was a young woman the mental health department was underfunded, and those suffering from mental illnesses were heavily stigmatised. Ortega's siblings saw their sister recover from her depression, but according to Ortega, she battled with the voices in her head for much of her adult life, although no one ever recalled her telling them about her issues. The voices told Ortega to close her schoolbooks, she told one psychologist, and as a result she struggled with schoolwork. One day, while she was in a shop, they purportedly told her to put back every

ABOVE In her native country, the Dominican Republic, Yoselyn Ortega said she battled with the voices in her head. But her family said they had no idea what she was going through

FAR-RIGHT Screams coming from the La Rochelle apartments on the Upper West Side of Manhattan were heard by neighbours, followed by Marina screaming to the security guard "My babysitter killed my kids"

“ HER SISTER NOTICED HOW THE SINGLE MOTHER WAS GAUNT AND WAS EXPERIENCING CONSTANT HEADACHES. BUT STILL NO ONE KNEW ABOUT THE SUPPOSED VOICES IN ORTEGA'S HEAD ”

Dominican Republic in 1962, Yoselyn Ortega had been one of seven children of grocer Rafael Ortega and Maria de los Angeles Garcia, only five of which had made it to adulthood. The Ortega household was one where they broke bread together, worked hard together, shared the responsibilities of chores and childcare, and at the end of a long day they climbed into shared beds and dreamt in slumber side by side.

When Yoselyn Ortega was 16, her 12-year-old sister died of an aneurysm. Her little sister's premature death had a devastating effect on the 16-year-old, who experienced what would be reported as the first of three depressive episodes in her lifetime.

item of shopping she'd picked up in the supermarket, so she eventually left the store empty-handed.

Despite this, in 1985 Ortega graduated from a local university with an accounting degree and moved to New York City to live with her sister in an apartment at 610 Riverside. She soon found stable work with a printing company. Within a decade she was married and had given birth to a baby boy named Jesus. When he was only four, she and his father divorced, and the single mother took her son back to her native country but later returned to the US. Ortega left her son with her family back in the Dominican Republic. She sent letters and money to help them raise her son.



Back in the US she did menial jobs, working for four months at the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007 as a nanny for her nephew's children in Dallas. In 2008 she returned to the Dominican Republic for an extended stay. During this visit, a close friend of Ortega's committed suicide on the balcony of her childhood home, prompting what appeared to be a second depressive episode. Only four months after the suicide, Ortega once more went back to the US. Her sister noticed how the single mother was gaunt and was experiencing constant headaches. But still no one knew about the supposed voices in Ortega's head.

It was in 2010 that Ortega, a naturalised US citizen for several years, became a de facto member of the Krim family. Her sister, who looked after a little girl in the same ballet class as Marina's two daughters, recommended her as a suitable sitter for the Krim children. Marina was heavily pregnant with Leo at the time and was on the lookout for a pair of helping hands. In good faith and with a glowing – later found to be falsified – recommendation from another family, Ortega was hired by Marina, favouring the 'highly recommended' nanny over an agency-checked professional. Before her arrest, Ortega had seemed like a knight in shining armour to the Krim family, but as she stood in the New York City courtroom, charged with two counts of first-degree murder and two counts of second-degree murder, that 'shining armour' had faded to a drab grey sweater.

SCARY POPPINS

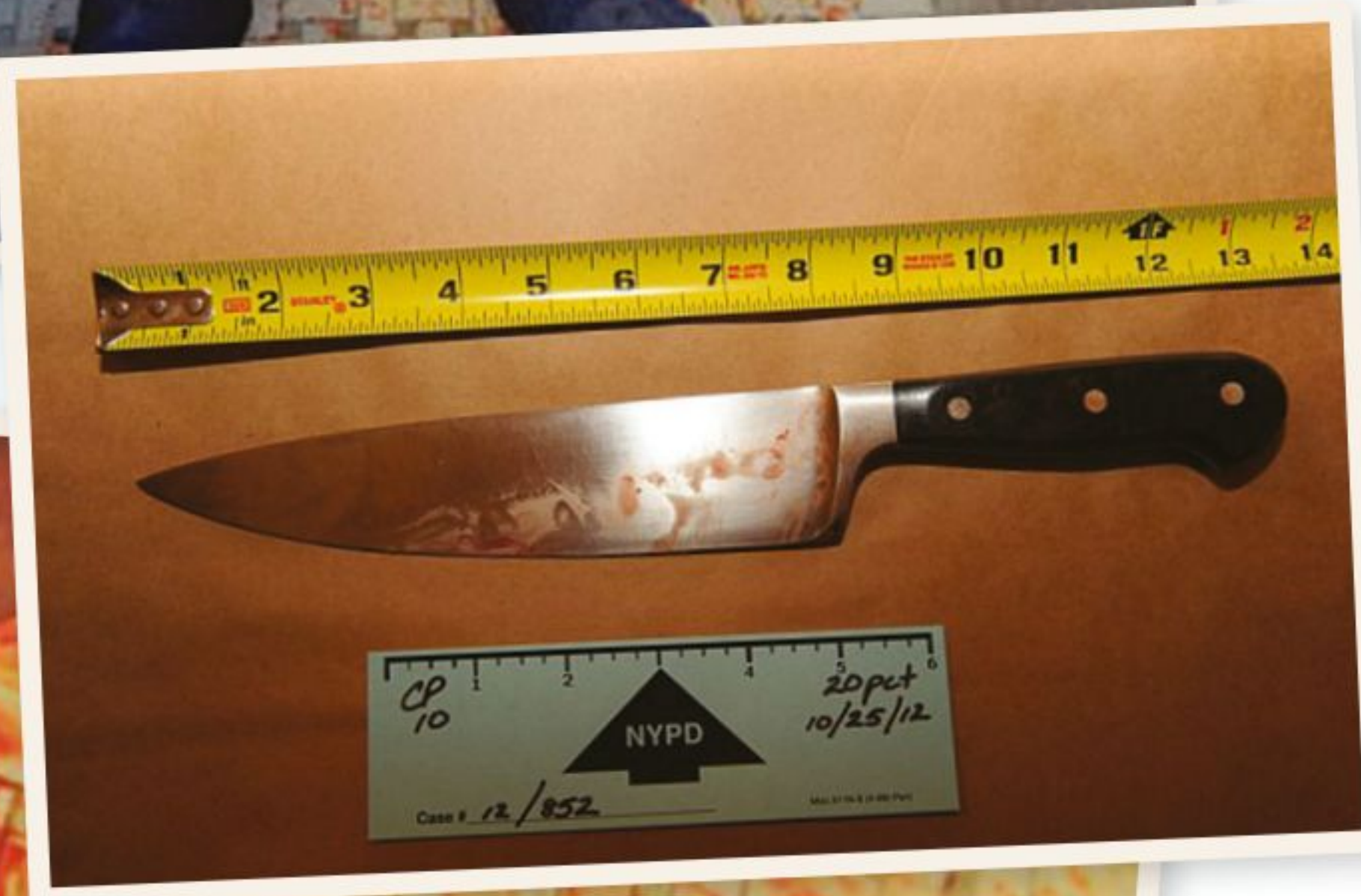
Ortega, herself a mother, would tell people she had four children – her son and the three Krim children that she doted on. The children called her 'Josie', and their parents welcomed her into their family. Friends and family members noted how happy Ortega always seemed when caring for the kids. However, the family nanny later claimed that the Krims could be cruel to her at times, and that Marina had voiced her dissatisfaction that Ortega wasn't interacting with the children enough or was feeding them junk food.

But Marina and her husband Kevin's family photographs show a different picture. Photos of them all in the Dominican Republic were taken some months before the murders. The family had paid for Ortega to fly back to see her family, knowing she was struggling financially and was homesick. The whole family flew out to Ortega's hometown to spend time with her family, treating it like a holiday in which their nanny was the centre of attention.

It was during this time that Ortega's life had begun to spiral once again. Her 17-year-old son moved to New York to live with his mother and finalise his schooling, attending a public high school. To earn more money the Krims employed Jesus to walk their dogs. The pair lived together in the Bronx following what is reported to have been a falling out with her sister, who kicked her out of the Harlem apartment they had been sharing. In the Bronx, Ortega supposedly began suffering from a bout of depression and was on the verge of an emotional breakdown, and therefore moved back into the Harlem apartment, where six others were living at the time.

Friends would later testify that with Jesus in the United States Ortega couldn't handle the responsibility of being a mother. She pulled her son from the public school and enrolled him at a private Catholic school: she reasoned that the public system wanted to hold her son back a few grades. Marina, aware that Ortega was struggling financially, gave Ortega five additional hours of work a week, cleaning the family's home for an extra \$100 a week. But Ortega had begun making plans of her own. She withdrew \$7,000 from her savings and gave it to her brother, telling him to "look after" her son. She said nothing else when he asked her what





“HER PRECIOUS CHILDREN WERE DRENCHED IN WET CRIMSON, LYING IN THE PORCELAIN BATHTUB, THEIR EYES GLASSED OVER AND STARING AT THE CEILING”

outside. Retracing her steps back to the lobby, she enquired if the on-duty security guard had seen her children and Ortega at all that day. He confirmed he had spotted them returning home earlier that afternoon. Marina retreated to the apartment for a second look.

During her second check, Marina spotted a beam of light beneath the bathroom door. She pushed the door open and under the stark glare of the bathroom light she saw them. Her precious children were drenched in wet crimson, lying in the porcelain bathtub, their eyes glassed over and staring at the ceiling. Marina would later tell a jury she “knew they were dead”. Standing metres from her, Ortega stared the horror-stricken mother straight in the eyes. Having witnessed the shocking scene from behind her mother, Nessie let out a blood-curdling scream as Ortega plunged a knife into her neck and collapsed next to the children.

Marina pulled Nessie from the apartment and ran down the stairs to call for help. “It was a scream you can’t imagine is even inside of you,” she later testified in a Manhattan courtroom. “I don’t even know where it came from. I just thought, ‘I’m never going to be able to talk to them ever again. They are dead. I just saw my kids dead.’”

Pathologists would later determine that Leo had been stabbed five times. Lulu had tried to fight back, but her small frame was no match for her brutal killer, who had stabbed her more than 30 times. Ortega had slit both children’s throats so ferociously that paramedics tasked with removing the bodies at first believed that they had been decapitated. Leo was so wet with blood medics were concerned he would slip out of their arms as they lifted him from the bathtub. Both of their tiny bodies fitted on one stretcher.

As for Ortega, the force of her self-mutilation had broken two bones in her neck. She was transported to the nearest hospital, where doctors managed to save her. Handcuffed to the hospital bed, she gently woke to find police officers wanting to question her about the murders. Unable to speak, she dictated a message to the officers using an alphabet board. Officers were stunned to see the message that had been spelt out for them offered no apology, remorse or regret. Instead Ortega merely complained that Marina wanted her to do five hours of cleaning a week. Shackled to the hospital bed, she told a psychologist that it was the devil who had instructed her to kill her victims and then herself.

The question at hand during the seven-week murder trial in 2018 would not be not if Ortega had killed the children, but why. Ortega pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity. The jury was reminded by the presiding judge, Gregory Carro, before the trial commenced that it was not the prosecution’s job to determine a motive, but instead it was important for the jury to determine Ortega’s sanity when committing the murders. Ortega’s attorney, Valerie Van Leer-Greenberg, said that her client had been driven to kill by the voices in her head. The prosecution however, said that Ortega was jealous of Marina,

she meant. According to Ortega, the day before she killed Lulu and Leo she and Marina had argued, and before she left that day the mother of three had ignored her when she said goodbye. This disagreement angered her.

On the morning of the murders, Yoselyn Ortega woke up and was on time for work. That day she had sent her son off to his private school, sending him a text to confirm he had arrived. She then left her own phone at home. She knew she would not need it again. Ortega arrived at the Krim household at 3pm and was asked to drop Lulu off at her ballet lesson, and was told that Marina would pick her up an hour later. When Marina arrived at the ballet class at 4pm, the teacher informed her that her daughter had never arrived for the lesson.

Worried, Marina texted Ortega but got no response. With her three-year-old daughter Nessie close behind her, Marina walked through the lobby of the apartment block, making a beeline for her apartment. Inside the apartment, the home appeared to be undisturbed and was shrouded in darkness, with the long shadows of the early evening moving in from

TOP As Marina Krim entered the bathroom where her children lay dead in the bathtub, Yoselyn Ortega tried to kill herself by plunging a knife into her neck

MIDDLE Using two knives from the Krims’ kitchen, Yoselyn Ortega carried out a prolonged attack on Lulu and Leo. Their deaths, a medical examiner later testified, would have taken several painful minutes

ABOVE Investigators attending to a murder scene that would be, for some, the most gruesome they’d ever seen, found one of the knives used in the murders in the bathroom, while the other was on the top of the fridge in the kitchen

who was wealthier and happier than the struggling single mother who looked after the children.

DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

The possible outcomes for Ortega were gloomy either way. If she was found sane and convicted, she faced spending the rest of her life in prison. If the jury bought into the insanity defence – a tall order in the state of New York – she would most likely be sent to a mental hospital indefinitely. Leo and Lulu's mother kicked off the testimonies after opening statements had been read on 1 March 2018 at the Manhattan Supreme Court. Approaching the stand, she stopped and turned to face the woman who had killed her children more than five years previously – the two had not seen each other since: "Oh, God, I just need a good look at you," Marina said before she climbed onto the stand.

When asked by Ortega's attorneys about any grievances the pair had, Marina explained that days before the killings

BLAME GAME

ORTEGA'S DEFENCE ATTORNEY QUIZZED DR. CAFFREY ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS SESSION WITH ORTEGA MERELY 80 HOURS BEFORE SHE SPIRALLED INTO A HOMICIDAL AND SUICIDAL FRENZY

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "In fact, you never asked Ms. Ortega, 'Did you ever hear any voices?'"

CAFFREY: "No."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Never asked her medical history?"

CAFFREY: "No."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Did you ever ask Ms. Ortega how long she'd been feeling sad?"

CAFFREY: "No."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Did you ask about her family history?"

CAFFREY: "No."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Ask about her sleep?"

CAFFREY: "No."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Her appetite?"

CAFFREY: "No."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Onset, persistence, duration of symptoms. You never ascertained how long?"

CAFFREY: "I didn't specifically ask about it."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "You did not ask about her hurting herself?"

CAFFREY: "Not that I recall."

VAN LEER-GREENBERG: "Hurting others?"

CAFFREY: "No."

BELOW Miladys Garcia reacting to photos of her sister Yoselyn Ortega. Miladys testified in court that Ortega loved the Krims' three children



The American media was consumed with the gruesome story and the seemingly trustworthy nanny's monstrous actions



Ortega had come to her with a bleach burn on her little finger, so she had bought natural cleaning products when she went shopping for Ortega to use instead. They had come to an arrangement, because Ortega needed extra money for her son's tuition, where Ortega would take on additional cleaning duties as well as caring for the children. She denied that she had been on the brink of firing the nanny, an allegation Ortega made to her attorneys.

Before she left the stand, Marina explained how in 2012 she had fallen pregnant, and when Ortega was told she'd been overjoyed. When the Krims learned that Marina had miscarried, Ortega appeared to be "mad that I had a miscarriage. And I was like oh my God, I had a weird [realisation] like: She's a narcissist. It's all about money." As Marina left the stand, after several hours of gruelling cross-examination plagued with banal questions about bottled water, sand and whether Ortega had ever received a bonus while working for the Krims, Marina stopped as she passed the defendant's table. "You're evil!" she screamed. Then, as security escorted her out, she turned merely metres from the woman who had killed her kids and bellowed, "You're evil and you like this. You love this. You're getting pleasure from this." She would not set foot back in the courtroom until the verdict was read several weeks later.

The children's father Kevin, an executive with CNBC, had learned of their murder as his plane touched down at JFK Airport, hours after his children had been killed. A voicemail left on his phone by his devastated wife and multiple messages from concerned friends began filtering through on his phone after the aircraft landed. He was met at the airport by police, who informed him of the attack. Asked by prosecutors if he had ever seen anything indicative that the woman looking after his children was mentally ill, Kevin replied, "Absolutely not. Never."

But Ortega's psychologist, Karen Rosenbaum, testified that Ortega had told her, "the devil wanted me for himself". Ortega had also told her before the killings that she felt the devil was starting to overtake her and that recently this feeling had gained momentum, getting significantly worse. The possession was "getting stronger in the week prior" to the murders, the nanny had told Rosenbaum. According to the psychologist, "When the devil overtakes her, she has no choice in the matter."



(top) Marina screamed "You're evil!" at Ortega as she left the stand during the trial (below) Kevin revealed in court the confusion and horror he felt after his plane landed and he started to hear the terrible news: "I was hoping this was just a nightmare, and it wasn't"

“PSYCHOLOGIST KAREN ROSENBAUM, TESTIFIED THAT ORTEGA HAD TOLD HER, ‘THE DEVIL WANTED ME FOR HIMSELF’”

Prosecutors quizzed Ortega's family members, who took the stand in her defence, and were asked why, if she wasn't equipped for childcare as they had described, spiralling into a depression when Jesus moved to the USA, didn't anyone object to her caring for other people's children.

The assistant district attorney called psychologist Ali Khadivi to the stand to testify. In what was a crushing blow to the defence's arguments, the court was shown footage from a nine-hour interview between Ortega and the psychologist in 2016. Ortega, who used a translator during the interview, denied that the devil had been in her ear before or during the murders.

Dr. Thomas A. Caffrey was also called to the stand during the trial to testify. Three days before she had killed the children, Ortega had phoned his office, insisting that she needed to see him. During his lunch hour he saw her for 40 minutes. After the session the psychologist wrote in his notes, "Prognosis: good." He diagnosed Ortega with generalised anxiety disorder. Dr. Caffrey told the court that Ortega didn't

ABOVE In April 2016 Yoselyn Ortega was offered a plea deal by the judge, of a minimum prison term for the two murders if she pleaded guilty. Ortega rejected the offer

LEFT Speaking about Yoselyn Ortega's mental state after the killings, Paul J. Browne, New York City Police Department's deputy commissioner of public information, stated "She was, according to others, seeking some professional help"





ABOVE & LEFT Marina and Kevin Krim set up the Leo and Lulu Fund in memory of their children, looking to keep their legacy alive through funding creative programmes for children

mention anything about voices instructing her to kill the children under her care.

A neighbour of Ortega's, Jennifer Reynosa, testified that days before the killing of Lulu and Leo, Ortega had told her of a "black shadow" following her. During cross-examination Reynosa was challenged as to why she hadn't initially mentioned this to investigators, instead only choosing to tell Ortega's legal team during the third interview with her, when one of Ortega's family members was present.

During the closing arguments, Assistant District Attorney Silberg rebutted Ortega's insanity plea, explaining how Ortega committed the murder "intentionally" and with "a full understanding of exactly what it was she was doing. Every stab, every slash." Counter-arguing the prosecution, Van Leer-Greenberg told the jurors that mental illness "does not announce itself like a bad cough or a limp, sometimes it sneaks up and nestles in before anyone takes notice."

The jurors deliberated for more than a day before delivering a guilty verdict on 19 April 2018. It seems the 12 men and women on the panel couldn't comprehend the nanny's lack of intent when she killed her two little victims. Ortega's stare didn't waver for even a second as she was convicted of murder.

During sentencing, the judge called the deaths of Leo and Lulu a "tragic case", deeming Ortega's actions "pure evil". He sentenced the convicted murderer to the maximum punishment of 25 years to life for both counts, ordering that they run consecutively.

Before the sentencing began, Ortega spoke through a translator, asking the forgiveness of God and the children's parents. "I'm very sorry for everything that happened but hope that no one goes through what I have gone through," she said. "Although many wish me all the worst, my life is in the hands of God. I am in jail but perhaps there are many more in prison than I am." Because of her age, Ortega will most likely die behind bars. Her despicable deed will forever be an inexcusable crime.

Kevin and Marina Krim have since moved out of the La Rochelle apartment where their children were murdered, relocating to a new home, and have had two more sons, Felix and Linus. In Lulu and Leo's memory, they have set up a fund supporting innovative art programmes for children, ensuring that although they are gone, the two young children are never forgotten. The Krims are also campaigning for legislation that would make lying on a job application or to provide false references for childcare positions a crime.

WARNING SIGNS

ORTEGA SUPPOSEDLY EXPERIENCED THREE DEPRESSIVE EPISODES IN HER LIFETIME – COULD THESE HAVE BEEN INDICATORS OF A STRUGGLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS?

1974

After Ortega's little sister died suddenly from an aneurysm, Ortega was noticeably withdrawn. She refused to leave the house for a year and progressively got worse until her parents took her to a doctor. She claimed she heard voices in her head.

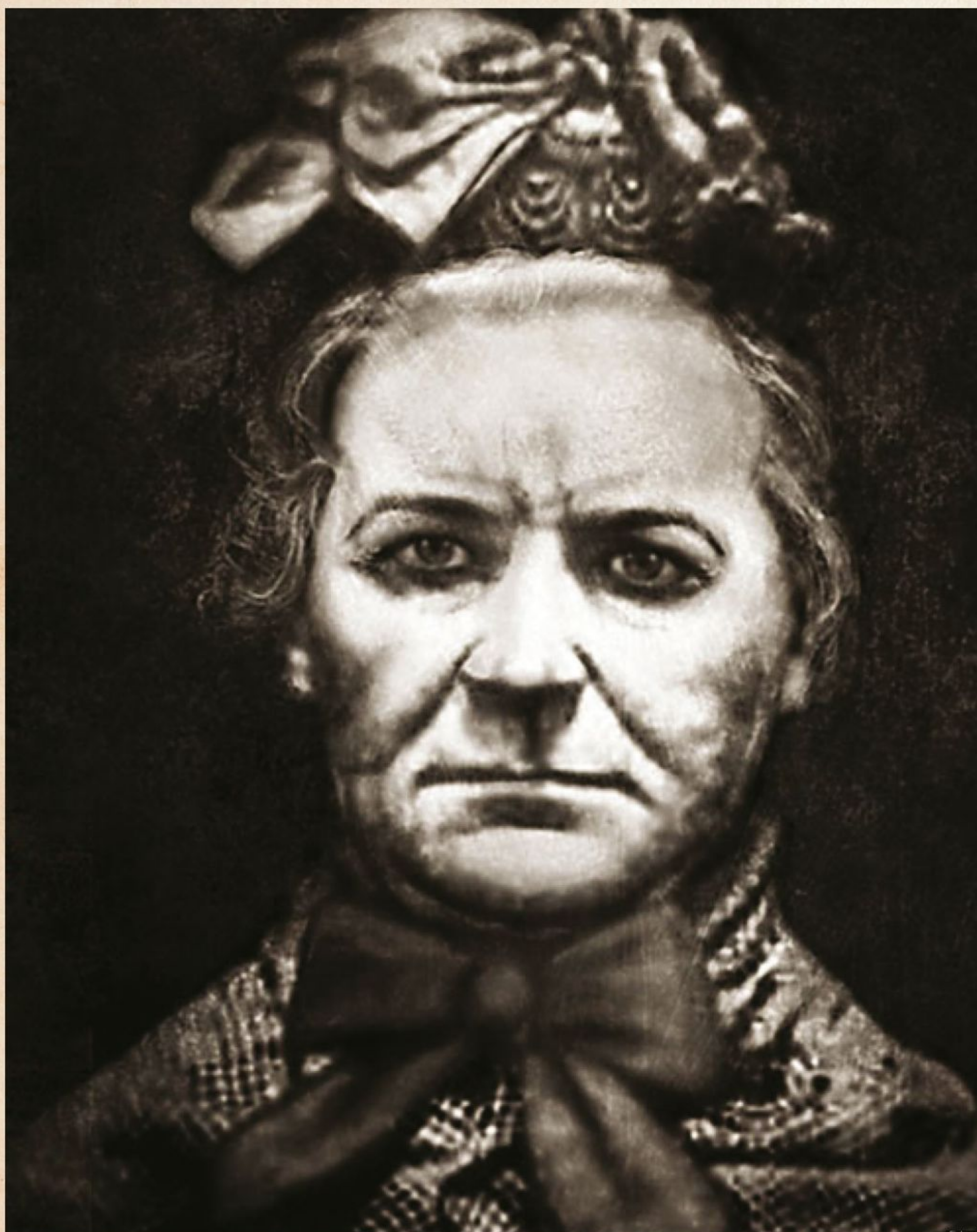
2008

When a close friend committed suicide on the balcony of her childhood home, Ortega sank into depression again. According to her son, who was then a teenager, she became a recluse who was scared of even a dog barking, and complained of hearing voices.

2012

Struggling financially and feeling the pressure since her 17-year-old son had moved to the US to live with her, a few people noticed how Ortega seemed down and unhappy, with a few revealing she had described a black presence following her.

BABY FARM BUTCHER



IN THE 1890S, AMELIA DYER — AN ORDINARY,
MIDDLE-AGED MOTHER — SHOCKED VICTORIAN
ENGLAND WHEN IT EMERGED SHE WAS MURDERING
THE BABIES IN HER CARE

WORDS NELL DARBY

**The old baby farmer, the wretch Mrs Dyer
At the Old Bailey her wages is paid.
In times long ago we'd have made a big fire
And roasted so nicely that wicked old jade.**

THE OGRESS OF READING, EARLY-20TH CENTURY

She was an unassuming, middle-aged woman, living in suburban Caversham, near Reading, in England. Many people must have passed her every day, thinking, if they thought of her at all, that she was just another mother doing her shopping, visiting family members, or carrying out her domestic chores. But behind that genteel façade was a truth that would shock and scandalise Victorian England. The woman's name was Amelia Dyer – and she was one of England's most notorious baby farmers.

Dyer was not the 'type' to commit murder, and so her offences were particularly shocking to readers of the British newspapers. She was a trained nurse from a good background, a woman who had been married and had children of her own. Yet she became known as the Ogress of Reading. What could have induced her to kill defenceless babies, and how was she able to do so for so long?

ANGELS OF DEATH

From the late 1860s onwards, there were a series of high-profile cases involving the killing of babies or young children. The victims tended to be the illegitimate offspring of poor women, often servants, who had been put out to nurse with other women, or fostered. Female servants had a precarious position, and if they became pregnant or had children out of wedlock, could rapidly find their employment at an end, leaving them dependent on family, friends, or the local workhouse. In order to keep their jobs – and themselves financially above water – they sought other women who could look after their children for them. They would pay money regularly for their children's food and board, answering adverts placed in newspapers by apparent angels offering homes for children who were either unwanted or whose mothers could not afford to keep them.

These adverts, however, were not vetted, and this led to unscrupulous individuals advertising their services with no intention of looking after the children. Instead, they would take the money offered, and either fail to ensure the child had adequate food and drink, neglecting them until they died – or, if particularly keen to use the money quickly, they would simply kill the child.

One of these women was Amelia Dyer. Dyer was a shoemaker's daughter, born near Bristol in 1837, and she had originally trained and worked as a nurse. However, by the 1870s, she had gone from being the poetic ideal of the 'angel of the house' to an angel of death. Having been tipped off by a midwife friend that there was money to be made from taking in other people's babies, she had soon changed 'career'. Like other baby farmers, she would place adverts to adopt or nurse babies, and in return for a fee – paid up front – she would arrange to meet the child's mother or other carer and take the child from them. However, a local doctor soon became suspicious of the number of death certificates he was being asked to issue for babies who had been 'looked after' by Dyer. She was charged with neglect, convicted, and served six months' hard labour in prison in 1879.

Dyer briefly tried to return to nursing on being released from jail, but was soon baby farming again. She had learned two things from her conviction: first, she would now kill the babies rather than simply neglect them, to save the expense of having to maintain them for any length of time. Second, she started to dispose of the babies' bodies herself, in order to avoid the need for a doctor to get involved – and to avoid raising suspicions. She continued to place adverts in the papers, emphasising her married status and respectability. It is no wonder that so many women thought she would be an ideal foster mother for their children.

One of these trusting women was 23-year-old barmaid Evelina Marmon. She had got pregnant in 1895, and while staying at a boarding house in Cheltenham in January 1896, she gave birth to a daughter, who she named Doris. She needed to return to work, and couldn't look after Doris, so placed an advert in the *Bristol Times* stating that she was

looking for a "respectable woman" to take her child. But in the same issue was an advert placed by the Hardings, a married couple who wanted to adopt a child. This was clearly fate. Evelina wrote to 'Mrs Harding', and was impressed by the woman's response that she sought to adopt a child not for financial gain but because she wanted company. However, when they met up at Cheltenham station, Mrs Harding was quick to accept a £10 payment from Evelina before taking Doris from her.

Of course, the Hardings didn't exist: Mrs Harding was simply one of Amelia Dyer's pseudonyms. Dyer, carrying Doris, caught the train down to London on 31 March 1896, making her way to her daughter Polly's house in Willesden. Here, she tied some dressmaking tape around the baby's neck and strangled her. She then packed Doris's clothes up ready to take to a pawnbroker. The next day, Dyer went out and brought back another child – this time, a little boy named Harry Simmons – and immediately strangled him, first removing the tape from around Doris's neck in order to use it again on Harry. On 2 April, Dyer packed both bodies in to her carpet bag and made her way back to her home in Caversham. At Caversham Lock, she threw the carpet bag into the Thames.

A CRIMINAL TYPE

A stout, grey haired woman, sensibly dressed with her shawl and bonnet, Dyer defied perceptions of the criminal. This was an era where criminal behaviour and what caused it were the subjects of intense inquiry, both in the newspapers and in the scientific and artistic worlds.

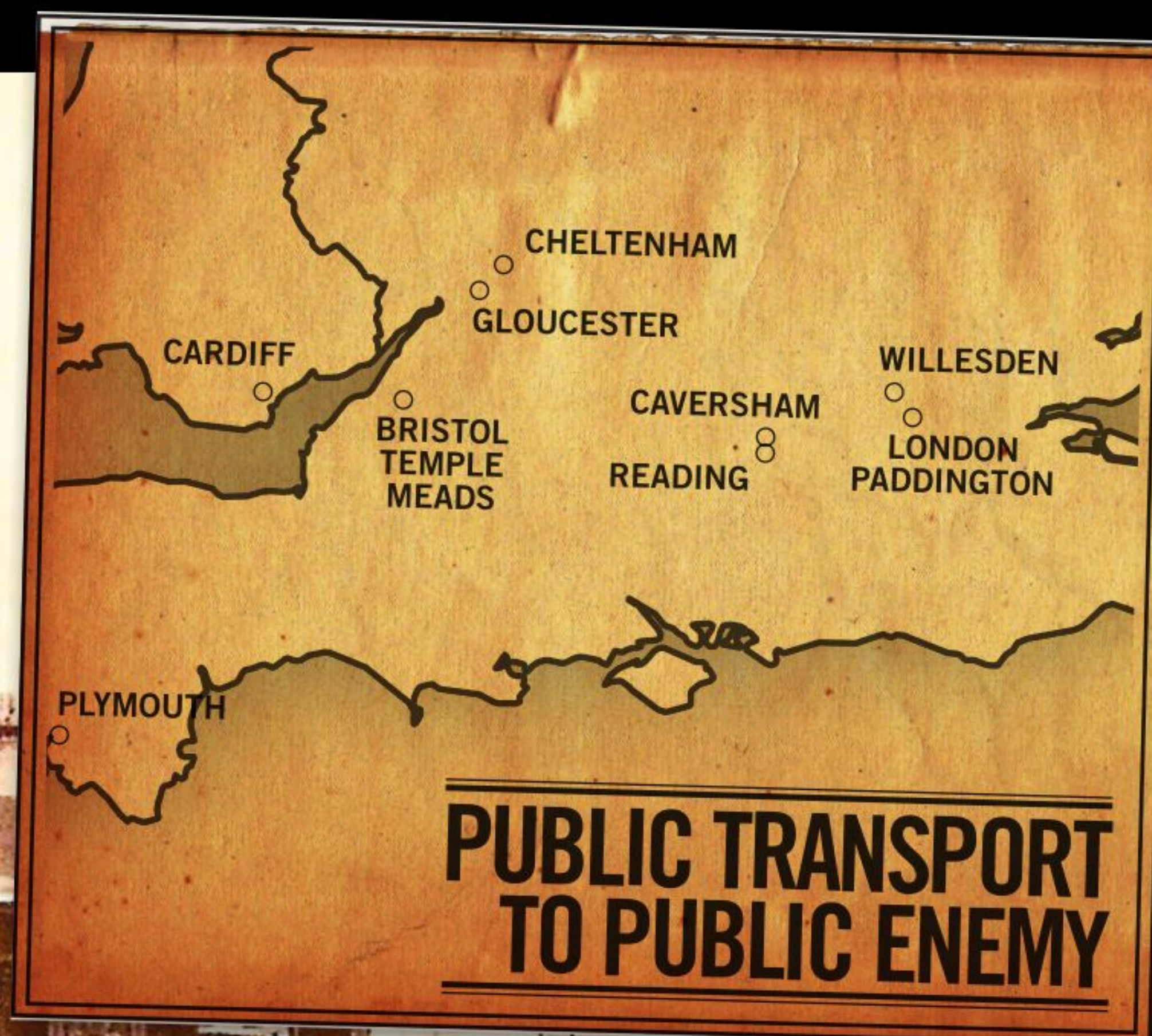
Several policemen and criminologists worldwide were busy exploring whether certain people were more prone to criminal behaviour than others. Alphonse Bertillon, in 1879, had produced a system to aid criminal investigation, focusing on the measurement and recording of body parts, heads and faces. In fiction and in research, the 'criminal tendency' was written about, and even the French artist Edgar Degas produced 'Criminal Physiognomies', depicting large ears and hooked noses in his profiles of individuals. Meanwhile, in Italy, criminologist Cesare Lombroso was investigating whether atavistic features were a sign of innate criminality. He believed that there were hereditary causes of crime that were evident in physical or mental abnormalities – these so-called atavistic features – and that criminals exhibited more of these defects than non-criminals.

Alongside the work of academics such as Lombroso were perceptions about who criminals were. For example, the Irish were seen as prone to drink-related violence and to wife-beating; the working class were generally seen as more prone



Baby farmer Amelia Dyer in 1896, the year she was convicted of murder and hanged. Today, the Thames Valley Police Museum still holds a lock of her hair

MARRIED couple with no family would adopt healthy child, nice country home. Terms £10 - Harding, care of Ship's Letter Exchange, Stokes Croft, Bristol.



to crime than those higher up the social ladder. Members of the Jewish population were regarded in a negative light. Charles Dickens had earlier depicted his thief Fagin as a Jewish character, and the stereotyped depiction of them as mercenary, unscrupulous money lenders – a leftover from Shakespearean times – continued. So in the late-19th century, the worlds of art, literature and science were concerned with what a criminal looked like, and where they came from.

BUCKING THE TREND

However, Amelia Dyer was a particularly shocking case, and for two main reasons. First, she appeared so respectable, and had had a good start in life – where had things gone so wrong? Her mother was known to have had mental-health issues before her early death when Dyer was 11, and Dyer appeared to have a genetic tendency to mental instability; after her first release from prison, she had attempted suicide and also had spells in lunatic asylums. However, it is actually more likely that she faked mental instability at those times when she thought her baby farming exploits were about to be exposed, and when she could not think of an alternative escape. Going to an asylum was, for her, preferable to prison.

It was not a reason for her criminal behaviour, but she was happy to use it as an excuse.

Second, the public revulsion about her offences was gender related. Women were supposed to be caring, maternal creatures – the Victorian ideal was a woman who kept the household calm and organised, looking after the servants and the children and giving her husband unconditional love. Dyer, though, had been separated from her husband for some time, and was motivated, it seemed, by greed. She was also shrewd and scheming, moving from Bristol to Cardiff and then to Reading to evade detection, adopting fake names, showing a distinct lack of empathy towards the mothers she came into contact with and their plight as unmarried, desperate, women. Worst of all, she showed no love towards the babies she was supposed to be an adoptive mother to, killing them in an unemotional way, with no attachment to them. This went against everything a Victorian woman was supposed to be.

ABOVE Amelia Dyer used the rail network to move around between Bristol, Reading, and London, collecting babies being given up for adoption

“ DYER PACKED BOTH BODIES IN TO HER CARPET BAG AND MADE HER WAY BACK TO HER HOME IN CAVERSHAM ”

MOTHER'S FRIEND

AMELIA DYER MAY HAVE DOPED THE BABIES SHE WAS 'MOTHER' TO BEFORE KILLING THEM

Back in the 1870s, Dyer had killed babies through neglect, either starving them or failing to get them medical attention for illnesses or diseases until they wasted away. But she was also aided by opiates. Laudanum, a solution containing morphine, was used in Godfrey's Cordial – one of the syrups known as 'mother's friend', which was often used by mothers to quieten babies. It is believed Dyer used an opiate such as laudanum to keep her babies quiet as they were dying.

After receiving a prison sentence for neglect, Dyer returned to her old tricks but now took active steps to kill the children she looked after, strangling them with fabric tape. Later, she proudly told police that 'her' babies' bodies would be easily recognisable because of the tape she had used to kill them.

She instead displayed what was seen as 'male' behaviour, and so her case was deemed to be particularly shocking.

A FAMILY FIRM

It is estimated that Dyer could have killed up to 400 children, which would cement her place in the annals of history as one of the worst serial killers ever known. She had been taking in children for years, after all, and already had that prior conviction for child neglect. But she became increasingly careless. While she was in London murdering Doris and

Harry, the body of a baby was discovered by a bargeman in Reading. Its body, wrapped up in brown paper, had not been weighted down sufficiently. It was the corpse of Helena Fry, and she was wrapped in paper that bore the name of Bristol's Temple Meads Station, together with a name and address. Dyer was identified as a suspect, and a honeytrap of sorts was instigated, using a young woman who pretended that she was a mother in need of a foster carer for her baby. Dyer arranged a meeting, but opened her door to detectives rather than the woman she was expecting. Her house reeked of decomposing bodies, although none were found there.

It was another month before the bodies of Doris and Harry were found; Evelina Marmon had to identify the small body of her baby daughter. Meanwhile, Dyer's daughter, Mary Ann (Polly), and son-in-law, Arthur Palmer, were strongly suspected of having aided her in her 'career', but the police could not find evidence of their involvement. Arthur was freed after Dyer wrote a confession exonerating him; Polly also had charges against her dropped.

HELPING THE HELPLESS?

Baby farming cases highlighted the plight of illegitimate children and their mothers. Margaret Waters, who had been convicted of baby farming a quarter of a century before Dyer,

“THE PUBLIC REVULSION ABOUT HER OFFENCES WAS GENDER RELATED. WOMEN WERE SUPPOSED TO BE CARING”

MRS WINSLOW'S

THE
MOTHER'S
FRIEND



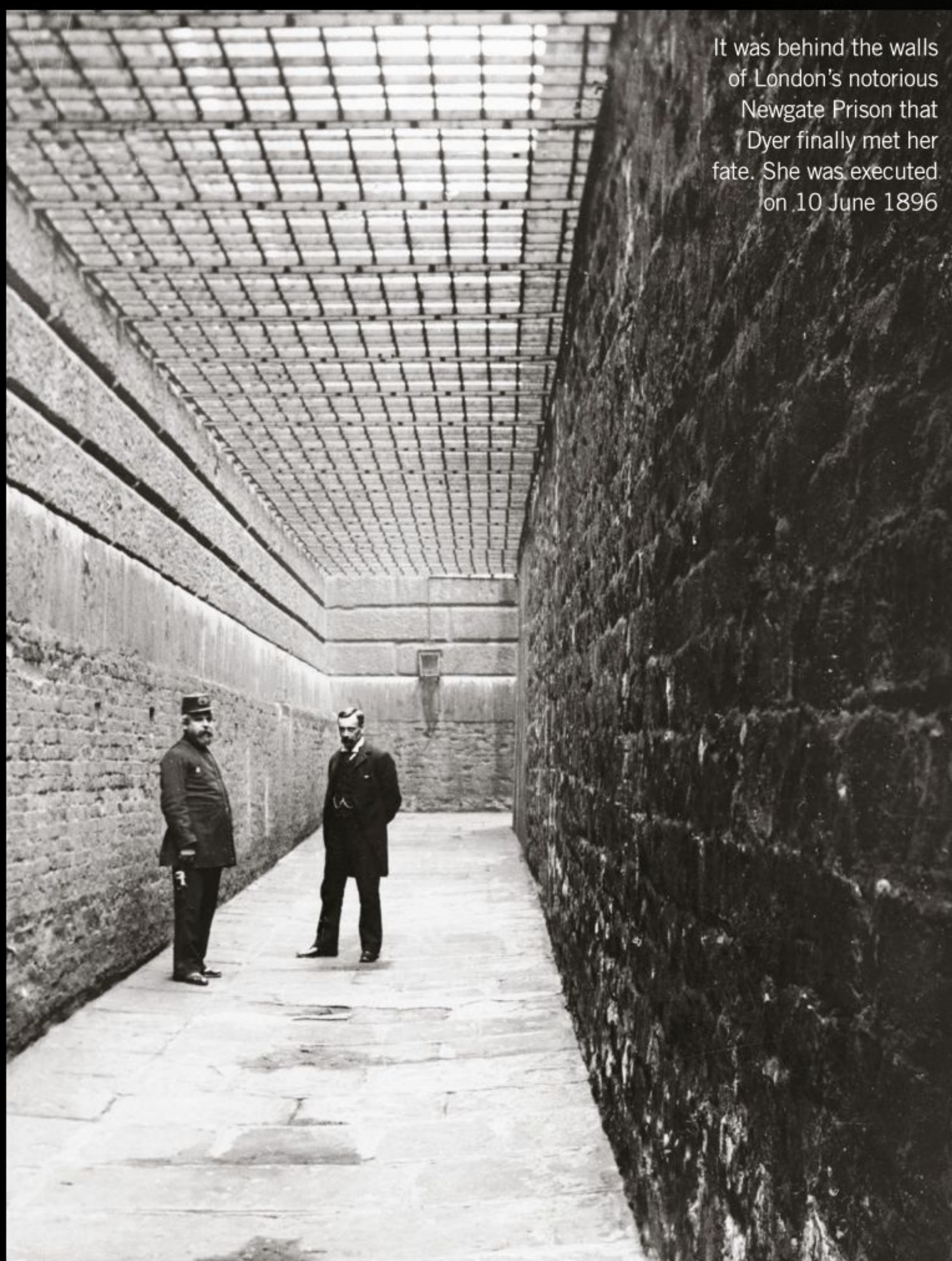
SOOTHING SYRUP

ABOVE 'Soothing syrups' were designed for use on children's aches and pains – but the laudanum found in some also made the children quiet and unresponsive, as Dyer knew

THE ILLUSTRATED
POLICE NEWS
LAW COURTS AND WEEKLY RECORD.
SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 1892.



S
OR
DREN
HING
P



It was behind the walls of London's notorious Newgate Prison that Dyer finally met her fate. She was executed on 10 June 1896

had brazenly stated that her case had been brought in order to "expose the system of getting rid of illegitimate children, a system which she denounced in strong terms." This was despite the fact that she had taken part in this 'system' herself. The judge at her trial, Lord Chief Baron Kelly, had argued that the country and its criminal justice system had "taken up the cause of the poor, helpless and innocent children" who were being farmed out to unscrupulous women. Yet despite the recognition that something ought to be done about innocent children whose mothers left them in the care of unscrupulous women, other baby farmers, such as Amelia Dyer, were allowed to continue these awful practices for decades to come.

Dyer gained immortality, of sorts, after her death. Unlike the children she butchered, many of who remain unidentified, her exploits became the subject of a ballad called the *Ogress Of Reading*, which was sung by children on the playgrounds and in the streets.

This apparently joyful song had a darker subtext; Amelia Dyer's crimes were seen as so shocking, so against everything a Victorian mother was supposed to stand for, that hanging was not enough for her. For the 'Ogress of Reading', being burned at the stake would have been a better punishment, as the broadside ballad made clear.

Despite the other baby farming cases of late-Victorian and early Edwardian Britain, it is Amelia Dyer's case that remains the most notorious, and the most written about – this was a woman of a certain age, from a decent background, who started with a good career as a nurse. She married, had children – but then rejected these symbols of conformity and conventionality to kill children and dump them unceremoniously in the river, near an ostensibly mundane town. Her crimes showed that women could really be as evil as men, and that shocked Victorian society.

NOTORIOUS BABY FARMERS

FROM 1870-1909, SEVERAL OTHER CASES OF
BABY FARM KILLERS MADE THE HEADLINES



ANNIE WALTER & AMELIA SACH

DATE OF APPREHENSION: 18 NOVEMBER 1902

Known as the Finchley Baby Farmers, this pair worked together. Sach, 29, ran a nursing home that organised foster parents for illegitimate children; they would be given to 54-year-old Walter, who killed them with morphine or by suffocation.

FATE: Hanged at Holloway Prison, 3 February 1903



ADA CHARD WILLIAMS

DATE OF APPREHENSION:

8 DECEMBER 1899

Williams, 24, was a baby farmer who killed unwanted children, then tied their bodies up with a distinctive knot before disposing of them. After being found guilty of murdering one illegitimate girl, she became the last woman to be executed at Newgate, London.

FATE: Hanged at Newgate Prison, 6 March 1900



RHODA WILLIS

DATE OF APPREHENSION:

5 JUNE 1907

Blonde-haired Willis was born in Sunderland in 1867. She was the only woman to be hanged in Wales in the 20th century, and the last baby farmer to be executed, being hanged on her 40th birthday.

FATE: Hanged at Cardiff Prison, 14 August 1907



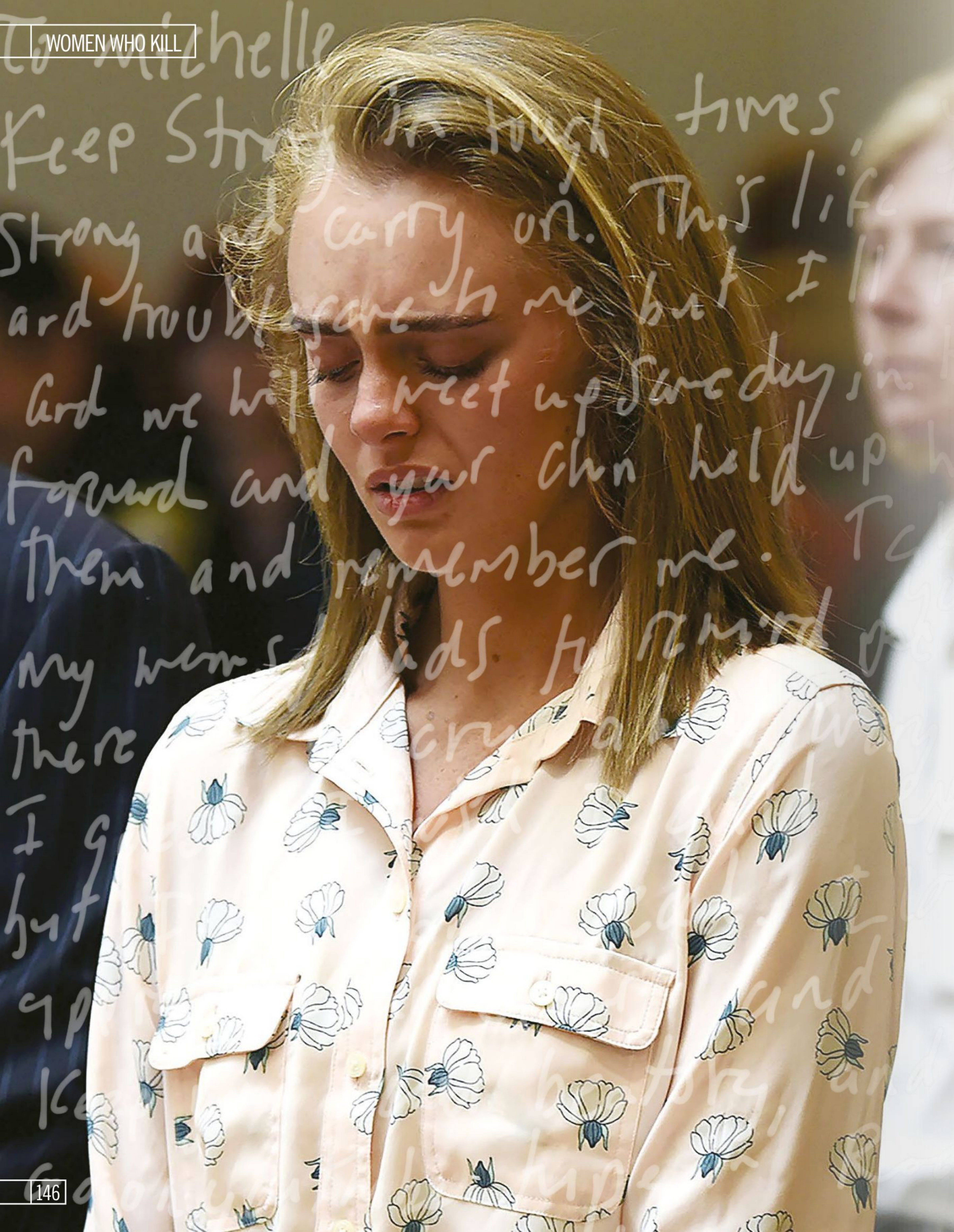
MARGARET WATERS

DATE OF APPREHENSION:

13 JUNE 1870

The first woman to be hanged for baby farming, 35-year-old widow Margaret Waters was found guilty of killing John Walter Cowan in the 'Brixton Baby Farming Case' at the Central Criminal Court, London. She was also suspected of murdering four other infants.

FATE: Hanged at Horsemonger Lane Gaol, on 11 October 1870



“YOU JUST NEED TO **DO IT** CONRAD”

‘STICKS AND STONES MAY BREAK MY BONES...’ BUT IN THE LANDMARK TRIAL OF TEXTING TEEN KILLER MICHELLE CARTER, WE LEARNED THAT WORDS CAN DEFINITELY HURT YOU

WORDS TANITA MATTHEWS

Michelle Carter’s trial was one of the most controversial of 2017. The sweet-looking 20-year-old Massachusetts defendant stood accused of the involuntary manslaughter of her boyfriend, Conrad Roy III, who in 2014 committed suicide by shutting himself inside his black Ford pickup truck and inhaling a lethal amount of carbon monoxide. He was 18 years old.

Carter had been in a neighbouring county when the incident occurred. But when police investigated Conrad’s death they found thousands of messages between the two. The correspondence showed that Carter had at one stage attempted to prevent a suicidal Conrad from taking his own life, but almost at the flick of a switch she began to advocate his mission. Between the pair of them they planned Conrad’s death. Carter walked Conrad through every step leading up to his final breaths.

When the deadly gas began to take effect, Conrad rushed out of the vehicle and called Carter to say he couldn’t kill himself after all. Carter told Conrad to “get back in” the truck. Conrad was found dead the following day. Prosecutors argued that Carter had wanted to play “the grieving girlfriend” and had thrived off the attention that followed Conrad’s suicide. But a small camp of people feel that as immoral as her actions were, she had acted under the fiercely protected amendment of free speech and therefore should not be deemed criminally responsible for Conrad’s decision to take his own life. The trial and sentencing was not only as

sensational as it sounds, but the verdict broke new ground regarding the responsibility the law attributes to texting.

“JUST DO IT”

Since her arrest in 2015, evidence against Carter had been mounting. The following year in February, a Bristol County grand jury had sought to indict her as a youthful offender for the involuntary manslaughter of her boyfriend. Being indicted as a youthful offender as opposed to a juvenile meant that if Carter was found guilty, she would face up to 20 years behind bars. Carter decided at the beginning of her trial to waive her right to a jury. Instead she chose to have her case heard only by the judge, Lawrence Moniz, who would ultimately decide her fate based on the evidence given.

As opening arguments got underway inside a Bristol juvenile court on 5 June, 2017, prosecutors Katie Rayburn and Maryclare Flynn, along with defence attorney Joseph Cataldo, built a picture of the events leading up to Conrad’s suicide. In a digital age where relationships are formed at the touch of a button, Carter and Conrad’s relationship began ‘the old fashioned way’.

The pair had met each other in 2012 while on vacations with their parents in Florida. Conrad was a marine salvage captain from Mattapoisett. He loved baseball and was particularly close to his mother. Carter was a schoolgirl from Norfolk County who liked *Glee*. But back at home, 30 miles



“THEIR CONVERSATIONS CHANGED. CARTER IMploRED CONRAD TO KILL HIMSELF”

apart, their relationship was held together, predominantly through text messages and social media.

At King Philip Regional High School in Wrentham, Carter was voted a ‘class clown’ and the person ‘most likely to brighten your day’, and although pictures from social media portray her as a bubbly and vivacious young woman, Carter often expressed how she felt isolated from girls in her school. She told Conrad how she struggled with social anxiety and an eating disorder and, like many a young teenage girl, feared she was not well liked enough. Prosecutors said that with school coming to an end for the summer Carter craved attention from her peers. “She used Conrad as a pawn in her sick game of life and death,” Flynn accused.

Conrad was not without his own demons, though, and Cataldo sought to show that to the judge. When Conrad was 16 his parents, Lynn Conrad and Conrad Roy Junior, separated. A child in the middle of a broken family unit, Conrad’s mental health suffered. At the age of 17 he attempted to commit suicide by overdosing on Tylenol (paracetamol). A female friend raised the alarm and Conrad survived. It was recommended that he receive counselling for his anxiety and depression, which he consented to. His mother was the first witness to be called to the stand, and she testified how her son had willingly taken prescribed medication in a bid to get better and turn his life around.

But by June 2014 Conrad’s thoughts had strayed back towards death, a feeling that he expressed to Carter, who

Carter texted Conrad’s sister asking if she knew where her brother was, knowing he had just killed himself

at first seemed eager to help. “I’m trying to dig you out,” an exasperated Carter text Conrad one evening. But he simply replied, “I don’t want to be dug out.” He told her, “I want to die.” Conrad had already shared with Carter his previous attempts to take his own life and had told her the next time he did it he “would not fail”. Weeks passed and Carter encouraged Conrad to seek help. She told him he was a “beautiful person” and suggested that they go together to receive help for their anxiety. But each time Conrad rebuffed her advances and resolved the conversation by insisting that nothing Carter could do or say would change his mind. “I can’t get better, I already made my decision,” Conrad told her.

In July the tone of their conversations changed. Carter now repeatedly implored Conrad to kill himself, insisting he would be better off dead. But what gave Conrad reason to hesitate was the thought of his grieving family. “Everyone will be sad for a while but they will get over it and move on,” Carter assured him. She explained to the troubled youth that she would be there to support his family through the aftermath of his suicide. “They know how sad you are, and they know that you are doing this to be happy and I think they will understand and accept it. They will always carry you in their hearts.”

The pair discussed all the ways in which Conrad could end his life. Conrad researched a variety of methods himself,

FRIEND OR FOE?

THE COURT WAS SHOWN THESE TEXT MESSAGES, BUT EXACTLY WHAT CARTER'S INTENTIONS WERE WAS A TOUGH CALL

23 JUNE 2014

CARTER: How do you want to harm yourself

CONRAD: Something idkk yet

CARTER: Please don't

CONRAD: I hate myself I'll always hate myself, I'm never gonna view myself as good I'm so far behind

7 JULY

CONRAD: If you were in my position. honestly what would you do

CARTER: I would get help. That's just me tho. When I have a serious problem like that, my first instinct is to get help because I know I can't do it on my own

CONRAD: Well it's too late I already gave up.

12 JULY

CARTER: So I guess you aren't gonna do it then, all that for nothing

CARTER: I'm just confused like you were so ready and determined

CONRAD: I am gonna eventually

CONRAD: I really don't know what I'm waiting for. . but I have everything lined up

CARTER: No, you're not, Conrad. Last night was it. You keep pushing it off and you say you'll do it but u never do. Its always gonna be that way if u don't take action

CARTER: You're just making it harder on yourself by pushing it off, you just have to do it

12 JULY

CARTER: You just need to do it Conrad or I'm gonna get you help

CARTER: You can't keep doing this everyday

CONRAD: Okay I'm gonna do it today

CARTER: Do you promise

CONRAD: I promise babe

CONRAD: I have to now

CARTER: Like right now?

CONRAD: where do I go? :(

CARTER: And u can't break a promise. And just go in a quiet parking lot or something.

CONRAD ROY III COMMITS SUICIDE ON 13 JULY

21 JULY

CARTER: I read this thing online about trying to agree with the person and that would make them change their mind because they see how stupid they're being. But it didn't work for you and I did it for too long. You probably thought I was okay with it and You talked about being in heaven and being my angel and at the time I went along with it because i knew you weren't gonna do anything. But you fucking did it and I'm so sorry I didn't save you.

including 'death by cop', hoping that by making his death look like an accident, it would save his family some grief. But in the end he decided that carbon monoxide would be the least painful way to end his life. Carter agreed: "If you emit 3,200ppm of it for five or ten mins you will die within half an hour," she explained.

Although Conrad was clearly thinking about suicide, actually doing it seemed to prompt him to pause and rationalise his feelings and how his actions would effect those around him. Impatient at his hesitation, Carter snapped: "People who commit suicide don't think this much. They just could do it."

Prosecutors explained how a week before his suicide, Carter had done a 'dry run', texting friends that Conrad was missing to evoke their sympathy, all the while she was texting him, telling him, "You just need to do it Conrad." She reminded him that before he killed himself he needed to wipe her messages from his phone.

"GET BACK IN"

On July 12, 2014, after days of discussing how and when Conrad would kill himself, the pair exchanged what would be their final words – words that would come back to haunt Carter when police realised she had been "in his ear" until the very end. Rayburn called the Fairhaven policeman who had found Conrad's body to the stand as a witness. Asking him to direct his answers to the judge, she questioned him on his 13 July search for Conrad after his mother reported him missing. The detective explained how Conrad's mother had been concerned that her son had not come home the previous evening and how police scoured the area for his truck, which they found in the car park of a K-Mart in

ABOVE LEFT Taking the stand to testify during the trial, Conrad's mother, Lynn, explained that her son had been self-medicating with marijuana in the months leading up to his death

ABOVE Michelle Carter was treated at McLean Hospital. It's possible that her own condition had a bearing on her fatal interaction with Conrad



Fairhaven, just as the pair had planned. When police found Conrad he was a “cherry red” colour due to the carbon monoxide poisoning.

Meanwhile, in Plainville, Carter began to dedicate her time to ‘raising awareness’ on suicide and described herself on social media as a suicide prevention advocate whose mission was to “save as many lives as possible”, knowing that she had done so little to save Conrad’s. Following his death, she regularly texted Conrad’s phone, including the night he had killed himself. After ringing multiple times with no answer she wrote, “I’m scared are you okay? I love you please answer.” She knew he would not respond. Police found this and more than 80 other messages on Conrad’s phone.

In some of the texts Carter expressed how she was struggling with her body image and mental health. She called Conrad her “angel”. Two months after his death, and a day after what would have been Conrad’s 19th birthday, she organised a softball charity game in his honour at the Plainville Athletic League. But when Conrad’s best friend attempted to relocate the event to his hometown, Carter grew upset and accused him of trying to “steal” her idea. School friend Alexandra ‘Lexi’ Elba testified that Carter had texted her in the run up to the charity event: “I put the Homers for Conrad on Facebook! I’m like famous now haha. Check it out!”

“NOT ONCE DID CARTER TELL ANYONE SHE HAD BEEN ON THE PHONE WITH CONRAD AS HE SLIPPED AWAY”

Homers for Conrad raised almost \$2,500. Carter texted Conrad to tell him that she would be donating the money to the National Alliance for Mental Illness. But 14 September, the day after the charity event, was the last time she texted his phone. Meanwhile, police were gathering evidence on Conrad’s suicide, investigating the circumstances that had led a teen – who only hours before he disappeared had been walking with his mother and sisters along a beach and going out for ice cream – to take his own life.

Conrad’s mother described on the stand how she had come across her son’s notebook after he died and found a number of suicide notes inside, written to her, her ex husband and to Carter. Lynn had never seen Carter and Conrad together and was completely unaware of their relationship. But Carter, as well as texting her deceased beau, had begun to text his mother, too.

Telling her to “be strong” for his sisters, Carter expressed how she had done everything she could to save him. “It’s my fault,” she told her. However, not once did she tell anyone

ABOVE The victim’s sister said that in the days after her brother’s death, Carter had asked her if she could have some of her brother’s ashes, despite having only met him a handful of times

RIGHT Conrad’s suicide note was introduced in court as evidence. Was he determined to die or had he been manipulated into thinking death was the only way out?



Carter wept in court as the verdict was handed down. The judge found her guilty of involuntary manslaughter after identifying her "wanton and reckless behaviour"

that she had been on the phone with Conrad as he slipped away. When Carter asked for the suicide letter, Conrad's mother put her off while the police conducted their investigations. She had no idea at this time that Carter had not only asked her son to write her a letter – she had also demanded that his final 'shoutout' on social media be to her.

"I LISTENED TO HIM DIE"

With Carter's words being used against her in a court of law, her defence attorney was faced with the task of proving that while what Carter had said was deemed morally unforgivable, it did not warrant criminal proceedings against her. Cataldo argued that Conrad's actions showed that he was determined to kill himself with or without Carter's help. Google searches on his laptop the day he committed suicide included "committing suicide to be happy" as well as a plethora of disturbing online research over the past few months.

Cataldo also argued that the young woman, struggling with her own issues, was "overwhelmed" by Conrad's issues and showed that she had spoken to her psychiatrist about

To Michelle

Keep Strong in tough times, you taught be how Strong and carry on. This life has been too chaotic and troublesome to me but I'll forever be in your arms and we will meet up someday in Heaven. Put your forward and your chin held up high. Our songs, them and remember me. Take anything from my mom's/dads to remind you of you me. there, I'm sorry about everything. I am me I guess. I wish I could express any gratitude I feel brain read. I love you and appreciate ur effort and kindness towards you. Keep your heart beating, and keep pushing forward. You're the hype in Rocky Balboa. Let the light guide you. I love you.



Carter's defence cited how Conrad "dragged" Carter into his problems, apologising for burdening her

how she was concerned for her boyfriend, who only had her to turn to. The young woman had also been prescribed the anti-depressant Celexa. Psychiatrist Dr Peter Breggin testified that the drugs Carter was taking for her anxiety were likely to leave her feeling "involuntarily intoxicated" and that between late June and mid-July they could have contributed to her irresponsible thinking regarding Conrad's death. Dr Breggin explained how the drugs target the brain's frontal lobe, which controls empathy and decision-making. Speaking about Carter's actions following Conrad's death, Dr Breggin told the court that Carter had been "enmeshed in a delusional system" due to her medication.

Cataldo argued that his client had thought that by pushing Conrad to carry out his fatal plan, she would ultimately be saving him when he came to realise the grave error he was making. But Rayburn's argument was strengthened by a phone call that was made from Conrad's phone to Carter – lasting 42 minutes – on the night that he died. Unlike the texts, it was hard to decipher what kind of final, verbal correspondence the pair had.

The most telling evidence of what had happened came in the form of more phone messages. In a text to her school friend Samantha Boardman on the night Conrad died, Carter wrote, "I heard moaning like someone was in pain and he wouldn't answer when I said his name. I stayed on the phone for like 20 mins and that's all I heard." She followed up with

ABOVE "The phones that we have now allow you to be virtually present with somebody," said prosecutor Katie Rayburn, adding that Carter told Conrad to "get back in the car even though she knew he was going to die"

“THE VICTIM WOULD HAVE BEEN COUGHING WITHIN TWO MINUTES AND WOULD HAVE LAPSED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS AFTER 13 MINUTES”

another text the next night asking her friend if they could “do something tonight to get my mind off it”.

Dr Faryl Sandler, a state medical examiner, described to the court the natural progression of someone who is exposed to carbon monoxide. According to Sandler, the victim would have been coughing within two minutes and would have lapsed into unconsciousness after 13 minutes. A person typically dies after 20 minutes of exposure, he explained. While Conrad lay dead and alone in his truck, Carter had been texting her friends: “I’m not wearing a bra” and “I think my friend just committed suicide”, as opposed to calling for

help. But Cataldo persisted that neither had Conrad called for help from the emergency services. Instead he

had chosen to call his girlfriend for support.

Perhaps the biggest insight into that 42-minute phone call came from the defendant herself, who had texted her friend Sam Boardman in September as she struggled to cope. “Sam, his death is my fault, like honestly I could have stopped him. I was on the phone with him and he got out of the truck because it was working, and he got scared, and I fucking told him to get back in Sam, because I knew he would do it all over again the next day and I couldn't have him live the way he was living anymore. I couldn't do it, I wouldn't let him.”

Another school friend, Olivia Mosologo, said Carter texted that she “heard him die” and was “talking on the phone with him when he killed himself”. In other messages she said

Carter didn't tell anyone that she already knew about Conrad's death until a few months after, when she told a friend that she had been on the phone with him as he "cried out in pain"

that she was "the only one he told things to" and that she "should've gotten more help".

In closing arguments, Rayburn told the judge that Carter had "created the harm" when she "told him to get back in the car" and that she knew that Conrad did not really want to die, that he was scared and that if he got back in the truck he would die. Drawing on Carter's text message to Boardman, she highlighted to the judge how Carter had "sat on the phone after telling an 18-year-old boy to get back in the car to kill himself, after he didn't want to, and she listened to him cry on the phone. She listened to his last words. She listened to his last breaths. And she listened to him die on the phone. All the while she could have easily called for help and she didn't." Rayburn asked that the judge find her guilty.

However, Cataldo told the judge, "This is not a homicide. Michelle Carter did not kill Conrad Roy. It's sad, it's tragic, but it's just not a homicide, and when Conrad sent Michelle a text he said, 'I don't want anyone to feel guilty about it there's nothing they could do'. He didn't want anyone to feel guilty about it your honour – it was his choice."

Cataldo also pointed out that the prosecution's job was to prove that Carter's actions were that of a killing as opposed to a person taking their own life, that the proof had to be "proof not by probable cause, not by clear and convincing evidence, but proof beyond a reasonable doubt" that Carter caused the death by her reckless conduct. Cataldo argued that the evidence showed Conrad was suicidal and caused his own death by his own thought process and well-documented intentions. Once both parties had delivered their closing arguments, it was time for the judge to consider his verdict.

"IT WAS MY FAULT"

On 16 June, Judge Moniz delivered a guilty verdict, advising that sentencing would be held on 3 August. Many fear the decision to find Carter guilty potentially opens up other avenues of how, in this technological era, the person behind a phone screen can be guilty of almost anything without having actually been at the scene of the crime.

Following the verdict, Lynn Conrad spoke of the girl now held responsible for her son's death. "I don't believe she has a conscience," she told CBS's *48 Hours* show. The victim's father said that the family was happy with the verdict.

Real Crime reached out to Lynn Conrad and her attorneys but they offered no comment on the trial. Carter's attorney would only say that they were "disappointed with the verdict" and declined to offer any more information. The District Attorney's office also refused to offer any comment.

Conrad's family had asked the judge to impose the maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Conrad's aunt Kim Bozzi told the judge "20 years may seem extreme but it is still 20 more than Conrad will ever have." However, Carter's father begged for mercy and asked that she be granted a probationary sentence instead, telling the judge that his daughter will never forget what she did to Conrad.

On 3 August, Michelle Carter was sentenced to 2.5 years behind bars, only 15 months of which will be a mandatory sentence. Judge Moniz, who also handed down a five-year probation term to Carter, said of the schoolgirl, "I have not found that Miss Carter's age or level of maturity or even her mental illness had any significant impact on her actions. She was mindful of the actions for which she now stands convicted." However, Carter's lawyer successfully petitioned for her sentence to be stayed, meaning Carter won't go to prison until all of her means of appeal have been exhausted.

**“I KNOW THE
RIGHT DOSE”**

COFFEE SHOP CYANIDE KILLER

A BITTER AND JEALOUS JESSICA WONGSO PLOTTED REVENGE THEN WATCHED AS HER FRIEND TOOK A SIP FROM THE TAINTED ICED COFFEE, SAT BACK AND WAITED FOR HER TO DIE

WORDS BEN BIGGS

Most of the CCTV footage of 27-year-old Wayan Mirna Salihin's death is an out-of-focus, watercolour palette of colour and shades. Nearly amorphous organic shapes drift in front the lens and between flat and inanimate objects. The flickering blocks of contrasting pale against dark background are all the indication of movement and gesture yielded by this grainy footage. But with a little foreknowledge, like the fact that this is a restaurant scene where three friends are meeting up for drinks and one of them is about to drink a Vietnamese iced coffee laced with cyanide, the patient observer will be able to bring the scene into focus again to discern the precise moment Salihin lapses into convulsions.

Her convicted killer was her friend, apparently her best friend at one point at least, 28-year-old Jessica Wongso. They had met while studying at the Billy Blue College of Design in Sydney. Wongso was a permanent resident of Australia, having moved there with her parents and two siblings around eight years previously. Separated for a time, she made contact with Salihin again via Whatsapp on 5 December 2015 and

eventually arranged a fateful meeting between them at the Olivier restaurant in Jakarta, on 6 January 2016.

What can be seen in the CCTV video can be described as suspicious in light of the fact that Salihin died in hospital about an hour after fitting on the floor of the café, just minutes after taking a sip of the drink brought for her by Wongso prior to her arrival. Wongso's detached observation of her friend's collapse while restaurant staff flocked to her aid, plus the apparent pleasure she took in being the centre of media attention in the subsequent court case, was equally strange. This seemed enough for the Indonesian courts to convict her of murder, of poisoning her friend's drink with cyanide and killing her in a protracted and painful fashion, despite some troubling questions that hovered over both the evidence and Wongso's motive. This wouldn't be the first case in which the defendant had been judged by both the media and public on their odd behaviour in court and in the limelight. What rational reason could there be for Wongso to travel from Australia to Jakarta, brazenly kill her friend in a very public place and knowingly risk death by firing squad?

“WHAT CAN BE SEEN IN THE CCTV VIDEO CAN BE DESCRIBED AS SUSPICIOUS, IN LIGHT OF THE FACT THAT SALIHIN DIED IN HOSPITAL AFTER FITTING ON THE FLOOR OF THE CAFE”

RIGHT Wongso is led into court facing a murder charge, with the same strange detachment she would show for most of the trial



6 JANUARY 2016

15.31

Wongso enters the Olivier restaurant in the West Mall and books a table for three for later that day. She leaves and continues shopping, returning a little later.



Facebook photos of Wongso (left) and Salihin during college betray no signs of the poisonous friendship to come

16.19

She returns to the restaurant and can be seen ordering drinks. She asks a nearby waiter to take a photo of her at the bar with her phone. She poses. The waiter hands her phone back and then she returns to the bar to wait for her order.

16.21

Having made her order, Wongso walks over to her reserved table.

16.22

She sits alone at the table and moves so she is partially obscured by a potted plant at the furthest end of the restaurant away from the CCTV camera. Perhaps she had checked the restaurant earlier for this apparently strategic position?

16.24

The three drinks Wongso had ordered for the girls arrive. She remains quietly waiting for her friends for the best part of the next hour. She appears to shuffle the drinks around the table and changes seats.

17.18

Her friends arrive: Salihin and Boon Juwita (known as 'Hani') take a seat either side of Wongso. They begin to chat among themselves and sip their drinks.

On the day, the killer spent time in Grand Indonesia Shopping Mall, site of the restaurant crime scene



ABOVE Mirna's twin sister Sandy (centre) appears relieved as Wongso is found guilty of premeditated murder at the Jakarta court



17.19

Wongso briefly walks away from the table, then returns to her seat followed by a waiter with another menu.

17.21

Salihin passes out in her seat and begins to convulse. Concern from Hani turns into panic. Olivier waiting staff arrive at the table.

17.23

CCTV footage shows an unconscious Salihin being moved from her seat and cradled by several staff, as the table is shifted out of the way. Wongso, having moved out of her seat, stands back and observes.

17.30

Meanwhile, in the kitchen of the restaurant, staff have taken the three drinks, including Salihin's tainted iced coffee, and are passing it back and forth, sniffing it.

17.30

There seems a lack of urgency as Salihin is taken out of the restaurant in a wheelchair, her head lolling backwards. Staff seem unaware of how serious her condition is. Wongso and Hani walk behind.

“STAFF HAVE TAKEN THE THREE DRINKS, INCLUDING SALIHIN'S TAINTED ICED COFFEE, AND ARE SNIFFING IT”

A DEADLY DOSE

INGESTING CYANIDE CAN BE LETHAL, BUT IT ISN'T NECESSARILY AS QUICK OR AS PAINLESS AS IT SEEMS IN THE MOVIES

Cyanide is, in its various forms, a chemical that most people will regularly come into contact with. It can be found in small and non-toxic quantities in almonds, fruit with stones like apricots and apples, tobacco smoke and car exhaust fumes. But when people talk about cyanide poison they usually mean the salt, either potassium or sodium cyanide, which looks like the common salt (sodium chloride) we sprinkle on food. This form is actually completely harmless, but converts into hydrogen cyanide in the presence of stomach acids, a small amount of which is deadly to most animals. Practically it takes just a 200-300mg dose of ingested cyanide salt to kill a 70-kilogram human – that's less than half a teaspoon. Cyanide kills by stopping the red blood cells from picking up oxygen. Effectively, this is as if you're breathing in an oxygen-free environment. A lethal dose can cause breathlessness, abdominal cramps and chest pain, a sudden change in heart rate, seizures, collapse and then death, usually around 30 minutes later. That time as the poison takes hold will be both terrifying and painful for the person: tests on lab animals rigged up to electrodes under the effects of acute cyanide poisoning show their brain lighting up with activity before the nerve cells shut down and they die.

One indicator that the victim has been poisoned with cyanide is their blood, which will be a bright pink colour and, post-mortem, will stain the body the same colour. In conjunction with other signs, this might prompt the forensic pathologist to test for cyanide poisoning. It's important to note that this test might not necessarily return a positive, but those investigating a murder will consider it in conjunction with other indicators, as well as the circumstances, in deciding whether the victim died of cyanide poisoning or not.

Investigators bring Wongso back to the Olivier restaurant for a reconstruction of the crime

ABOVE Throughout the trial, Wongso would smile for the camera and appear pleased with the media attention

18.00 (ESTIMATED)

Salihin is put in an ambulance and taken to hospital, but she dies on the way there.

18.30

The ambulance arrives at Jakarta's RSCM hospital, where Salihin is soon pronounced dead.

19.40

70 minutes after doctors pronounce Salihin's death, a toxicological investigation is conducted that, on 10 January 2016, will produce interesting, if not conclusive, results for the trial.

This coarse, white powder is a lethal dose of potassium cyanide, no more than would cover a penny and similar to the amount discovered in Salihin's coffee

"THIS IS FOR YOU"

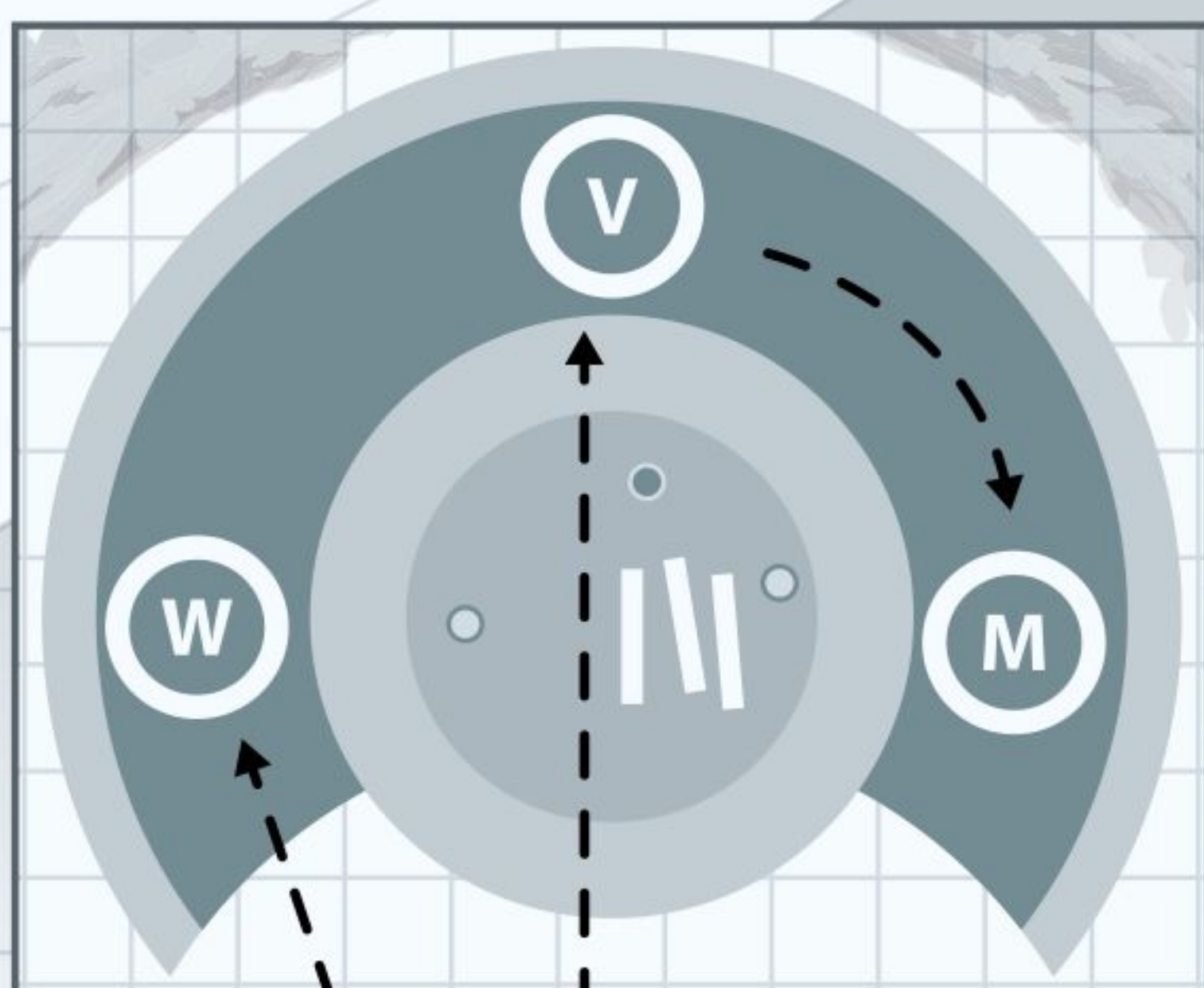
SHE KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG FROM THE FIRST TASTE OF HER FAVOURITE BEVERAGE, BUT BY THEN IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE



1 HIDDEN AGENDA
Wongso sits at her table with the Vietnamese iced coffee and two cocktails. She moves to the middle of the sofa and puts a straw into the coffee, then positions it between her and the three gift bags on the table, obstructing the CCTV camera shot.



2 POISON CHALICE
How Wongso poisoned the coffee exactly might never be known, but from behind those gift bags, she could have poured the cyanide as a salt from a sealed baggie, or opened a cyanide capsule and poured the contents in. Incidentally, cyanide is readily available in Indonesia as an insecticide and pest control agent for farmers.



3 SHE SETS THE SCENE
Just before her friends arrive, Wongso moves back to her original seat and pushes the coffee to the middle of the table, with the gift bags next to her. When the two girls arrive, Wongso is sitting on the right hand side of the sofa, Salihin slides along the seat to the middle and then Hani sits next to her.



REC ●

4 "THIS IS FOR YOU"

The three friends chat between themselves, Hani and Salihin sitting closer to each other and Wongso on the far side of the table. Wongso points across to the Vietnamese Iced Coffee that has been on the table for more than 30 minutes now. "This is for you, Mir," she says. "You said you wanted it."

**5 A BITTER AFTERTASTE**

Salihin takes a sip from the glass and her reaction is immediate: "This is really not good, this is awful." She grimaces, but appears to take another sip, just to be sure. She waves her hand in front of her mouth, as if she has just drunk something very spicy. Hani takes the glass and brings it up to her face, as if to sniff it.

**6 DEADLY EFFICIENCY**

Over the next 90 seconds or so, while the women chat and scan through the menu, Salihin continues to wave her hand in front of her mouth and push her hair away from her face. An observer might think she was trying to cool off. Suddenly she slumps into the seat and her head falls onto the back of the sofa as the poison takes hold and she loses consciousness. Hani tries to wake her up. Wongso sits and watches.



SOME COFFEE WITH YOUR CYANIDE?

PROSECUTION PAINTED A PICTURE OF AN UNSTABLE CHARACTER AND A BITTERLY JEALOUS FRIEND

The toxicological lab report found evidence of bleeding in Salihin's stomach along with a small amount of cyanide several days after, but Salihin's liver, gastric fluid, bile and urine tested negative for cyanide 70 minutes after her death. The test on the Vietnamese iced coffee was telling, however: 298mg of cyanide was found in her remaining drink, easily enough to kill a small woman like Salihin.

The court case wasn't as clear-cut either. It transpired that Hani had noticed the Vietnamese iced coffee's strange, yellowish colour, had taken a sip and experienced the exact burning sensation in her mouth Salihin had mentioned before she lapsed into unconsciousness. She suffered no ill effects.

The prosecution put it to the Indonesian judges that Wongso was an emotionally unstable woman and jealous of Salihin, who had criticised Wongso's now ex-boyfriend Patrick O'Connor, telling her that he was "rough" and a "drug user". She split with O'Connor then got caught up in another legal wrangle in Australia – a serious drink-driving charge that would have seen her facing a Sydney magistrate on 26 February 2016, if she hadn't been in an Indonesian jail on a murder charge. More dirt was dug up: Kristie Carter, Wongso's former boss at New South Wales Ambulance service, described her as a manipulative person with "two different personalities". Carter told New South Wales police that Wongso had once told her, "You must die and your mum must die," and that, "If I wanted to kill someone I surely know how, I can get a pistol and I know the right dose."

Meanwhile, Salihin had recently been married and was making plans for a future with her new husband. Facebook photos told of a fairy-tale wedding that apparently stuck in Wongso's craw, "To avenge her pain," the prosecutors said, "the defendant planned to take away Mirna's life."

Wongso completely denied all charges and appeared confident, sometimes perversely gleeful, in the spotlight. So convinced was she that Jakarta Central District Court would find her innocent that she had packed her clothes to return to Australia. In the end, Wongso was found guilty of premeditated murder and would have faced a death sentence if not for a deal made between the Indonesian and Australian authorities. In the end, she got 20 years in Indonesian prison, arguably one of the hardest places in the world to do time.

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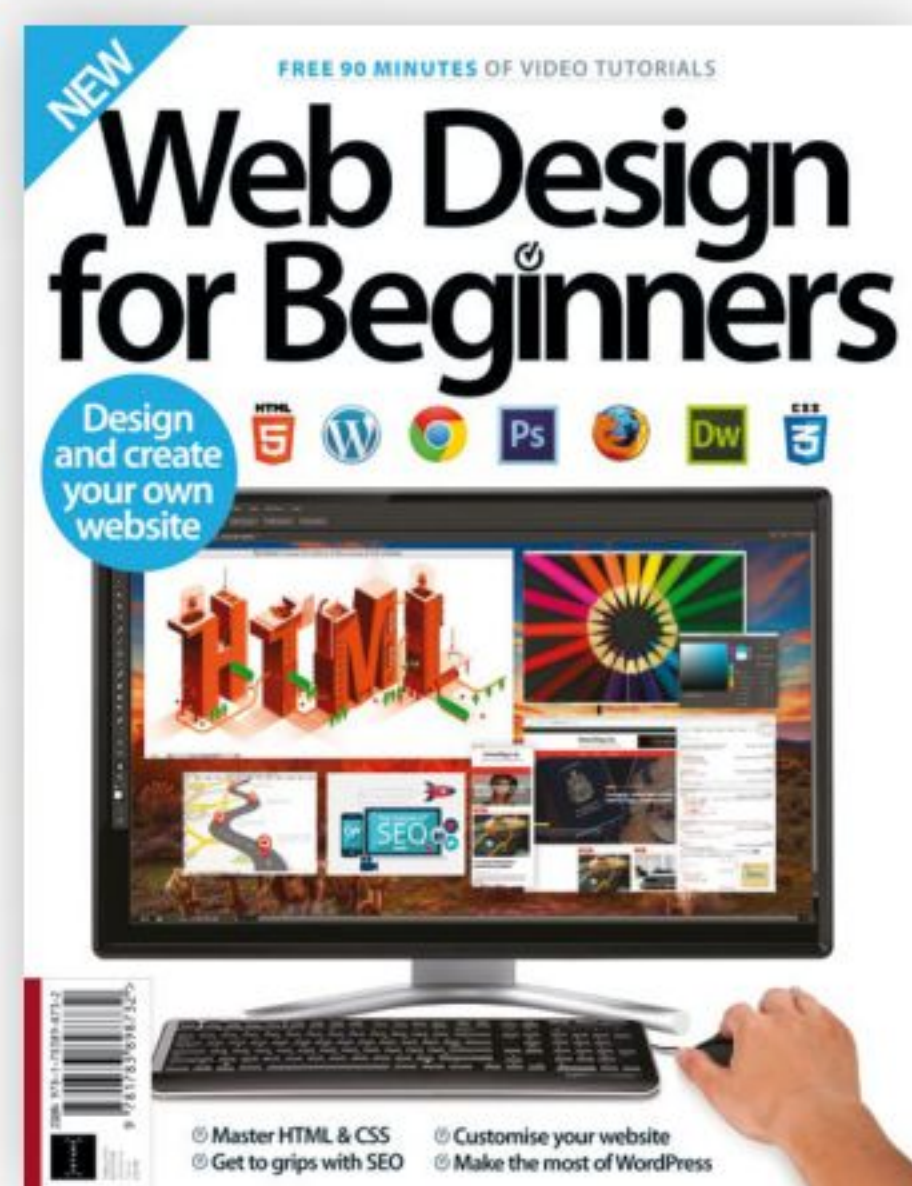


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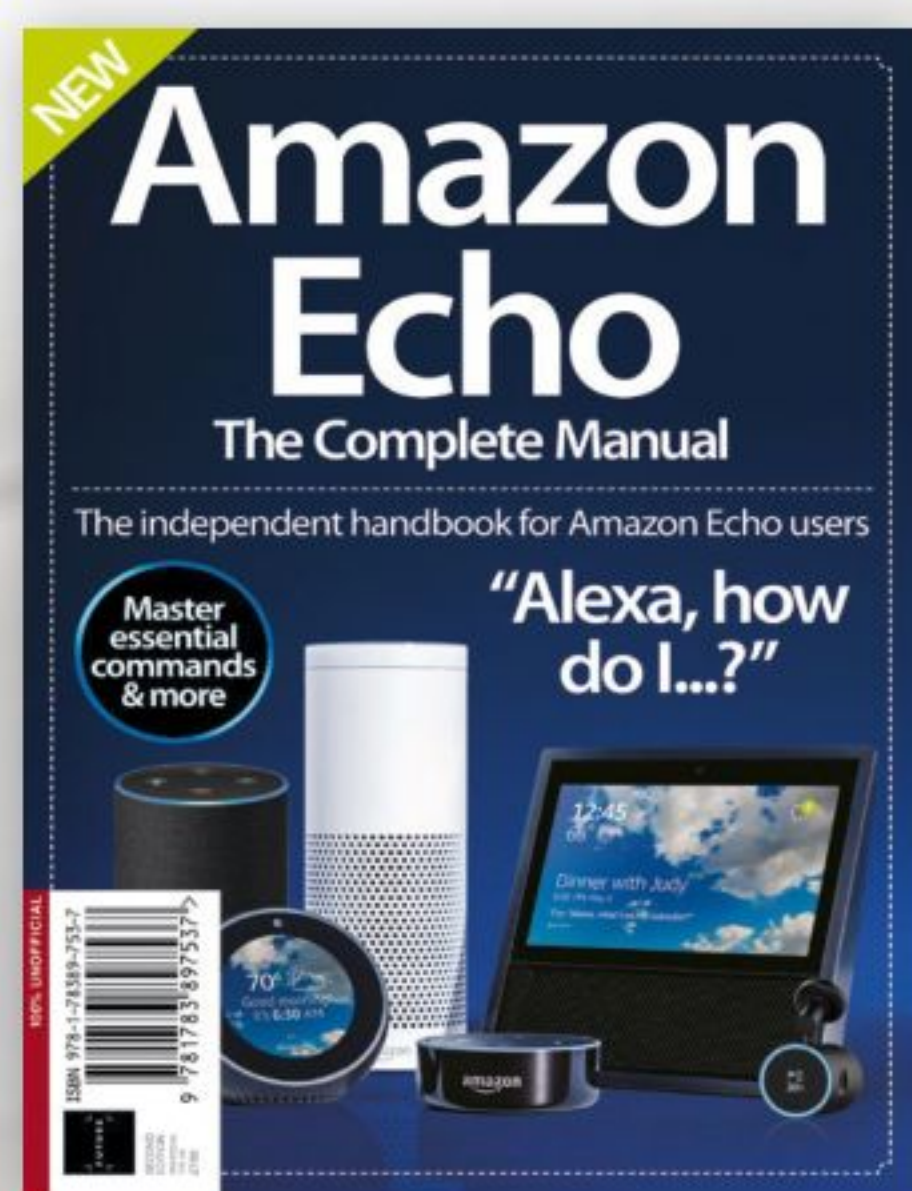


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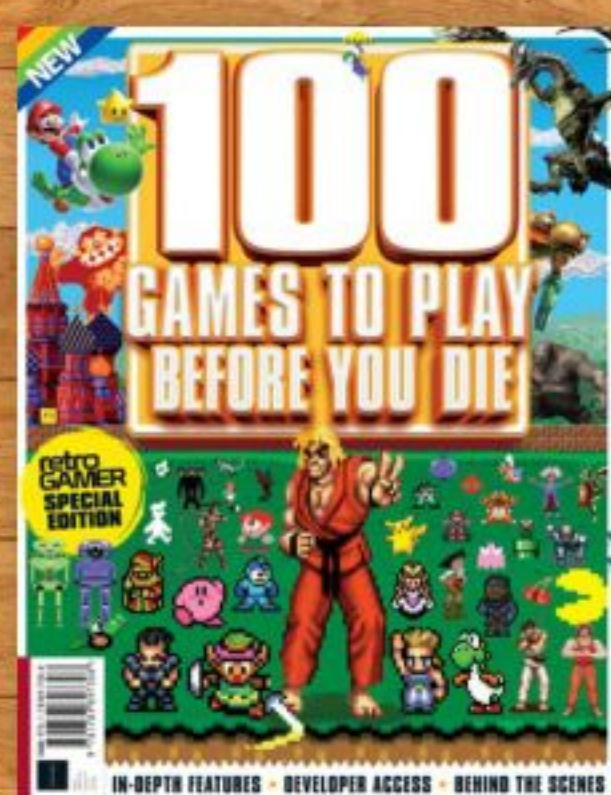
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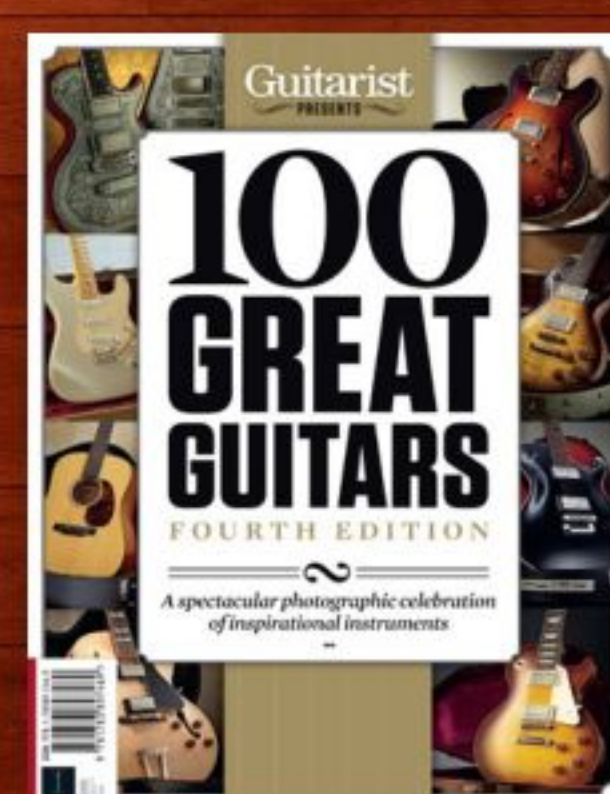
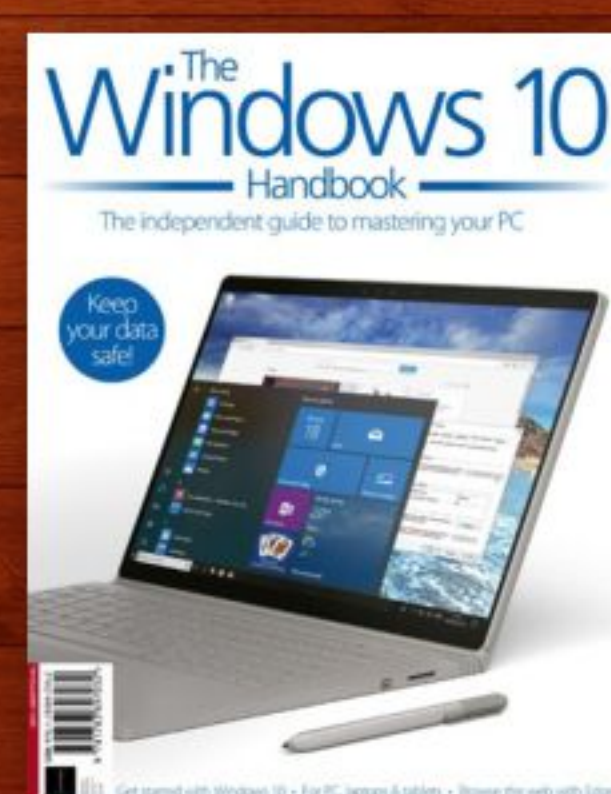
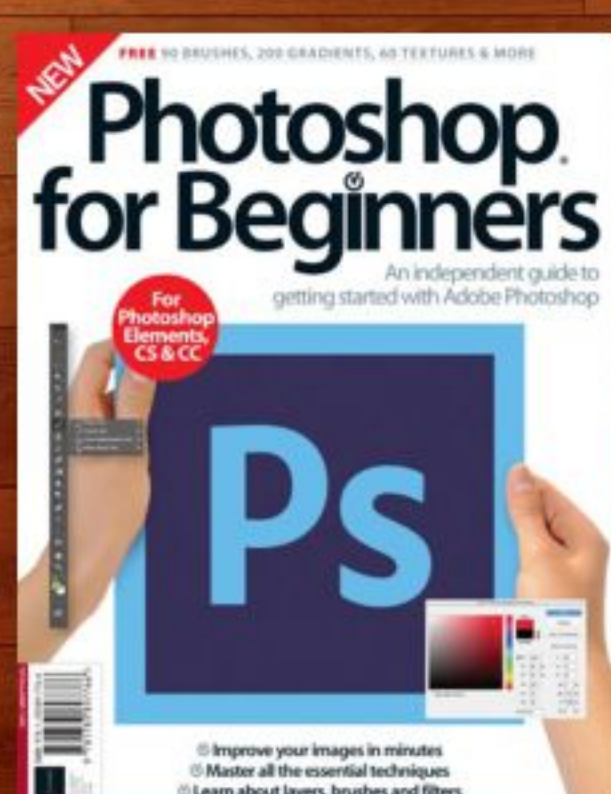
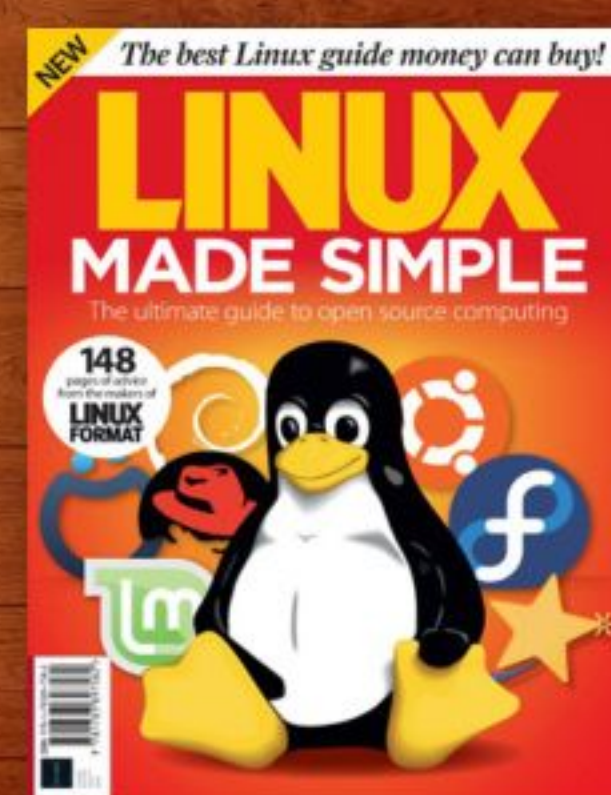


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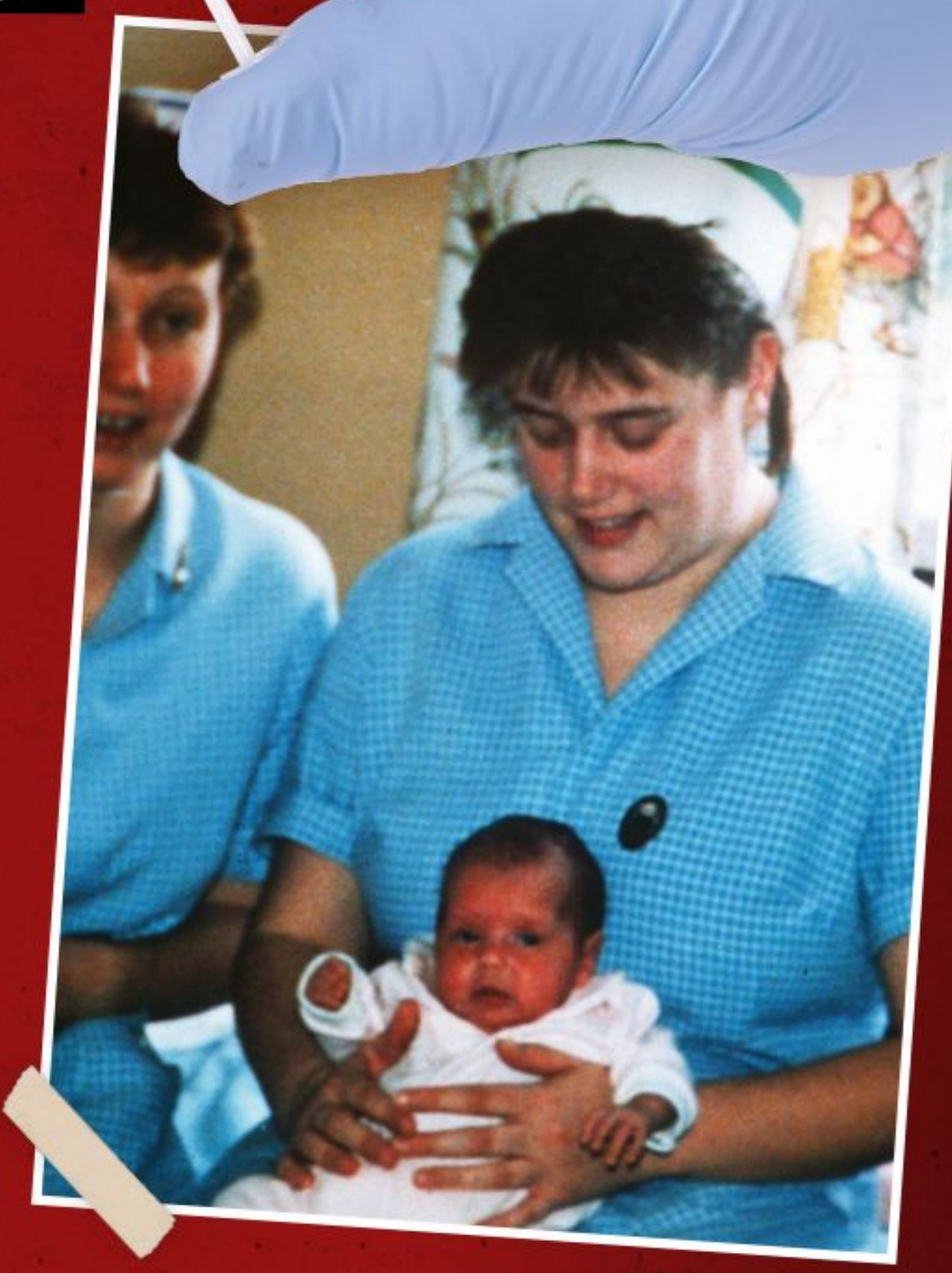
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